



After impeachment: Congress adrift, oversight uncertain

By LISA MASCARO
AP Congressional
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inside the Capitol, it's as if the impeachment of President Donald Trump never happened.

One week after the historic undertaking shuttered to a close, Congress is feverishly back at work emboldened but also arguably diminished by the outcome.

Senate Republicans are flexing their new status as Trump's unshakable allies, hitching their election pursuits to his and looking the other way as the president seems to dole out favoritism for friends and payback for critics with apparent impunity. They're back to confirming record numbers of judicial nominees viewing impeachment politically as a net gain.



Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, left, and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, walk together following a vote at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020.

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Continued from Front

"We won and they lost," declared Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. House Democrats are frantically reviving their kitchen-table agenda of health care and pocketbook priorities, a direct appeal to voters after spending the past months focused on erecting a firewall against potential wrongdoing by the president.

What has become clear in the aftermath of the impeachment proceedings is the stark realization that the legislative branch can only carry the country so far as a check on the executive. It's now up to voters to decide.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., talks to reporters following a GOP strategy meeting at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020.

Associated Press

The outcome leaves Congress adrift, its legislative agenda uncertain, its oversight role challenged. Both parties are in flux as the

nation's political energy turns toward the presidential primaries ahead of the November election, when voters will also decide con-

trol of the House and Senate. "Everything is at stake in November," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the Democratic caucus chairman, as he implored Americans to prepare to vote "as if your life depends on it."

Democrats warn that Trump, far from having learned lessons from becoming the third impeached president, is in fact engaged in an escalating pattern of retribution and political favoritism that started as soon as he was acquitted by the Senate.

In a matter of days, the White House reassigned an Army officer, Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, a key witness in the impeachment inquiry, from the National Security Council, and pushed his twin brother, a council lawyer, out with him. Ambassador Gordon Sondland was recalled from his post.

Then, Trump tweeted it was "very unfair" that associate Roger Stone was being recommended for up to nine years in prison after being convicted of witness tampering, obstruction and lying to Congress in the Russia probe. The Justice Department swiftly backed off, four government prosecutors withdrew from the case and the White House nixed the nomination of Jessie Liu, the supervising attorney, who was in line for a Treasury post.

On Wednesday, Sen. Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer called on the Justice Department's inspector general to look into the matter. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., agreed there needs to be an investigation.

"What we are witnessing is a crisis in the rule of law in America," Schumer said.

"Republicans thought the president would learn his lesson. The lesson the president learned was that the Republican Party will not hold him accountable no matter how egregious his behavior," he said.

Some Republicans who indicated the president might temper his behavior acknowledged Wednesday the limits. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said, "There haven't been very strong indicators this week that he has." "I said before that I would hope that the president would learn from that experience," said Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.

"The president is his own person, and I'm my own person, and you can judge whether you think he has." Asked if the president has learned any lessons from impeachment, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said: "He seems the same as he did two weeks ago." Democrats, though, are displaying only tepid enthusiasm for digging deeper into Trump's alleged wrongdoings after the Senate voted last week to acquit him of the charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress in the Ukraine matter.

Privately, Democrats say there is little expectation the House will issue a subpoena for John Bolton, the former national security adviser whose forthcoming book holds fresh revelations about Trump's pressure on Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden that was central to the impeachment charges.

Attorney General William Barr is scheduled to testify before the House Judiciary Committee in late March, it was announced Wednesday. □

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Jury finds Mar-a-Lago intruder not guilty of trespassing

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)

— A Florida jury acquitted a Chinese woman Wednesday of trespassing at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort after she testified she didn't understand a security guard who told her to leave.

However, jurors did find Jing Lu, 56, guilty of resisting a police officer without violence during her Dec. 18 arrest. The incident marked the second time in 2019 that a Chinese national was charged with illicitly entering Trump's Florida resort. Prosecutors told jurors



This Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019, file booking photo provided by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, in Fla., shows Jing Lu.

Associated Press

that Lu purposely intruded in a "calculated" and "planned" manner. She has been in custody since her arrest because her visa to remain in the United States has expired.

Prosecutors said she ignored a warning to leave the grounds and returned through a side entrance and continued taking pictures. Mar-a-Lago is now Trump's official residence, moving there from New York City last year, but he was not in Florida when Lu was arrested.

Lu, testifying through a Mandarin interpreter, said

she paid \$200 for a Chinese guide to drop her off at various South Florida locations. She said her language barrier prevented her from understanding a security officer's orders to leave the property. Lu's tour guide then took her to Palm Beach's Worth Avenue shopping district, where she was stopped by two Palm Beach police officers. They testified that she wouldn't consent to being questioned and resisted when they tried to handcuff her.

Lu testified that she was scared when the officers

approached her, adding that she didn't know why she was being handcuffed. Palm Beach County Judge Mark Eissey set Lu's sentencing for Friday. She faces up to one year in jail on the misdemeanor charge.

Mar-a-Lago has had a rash of security breaches, with at least three trespassing events over the past 14 months, two of them involving Chinese nationals.

Last March, Yujing Zhang, a 33-year-old Shanghai businesswoman, gained access to Mar-a-Lago by telling Secret Service agents she was there to swim. □

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Iowa Democratic Party chairman resigns after caucus chaos

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

The chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party announced his resignation Wednesday after a disastrous caucus process beset by technical glitches led to a day-long delay in reporting the results, inconsistencies in the numbers and no clear winner. The embarrassing episode also threatened Iowa's cherished status as the first voting contest of the presidential primary season and led both front-runners to request a partial recanvass of the results.

"The fact is that Democrats deserved better than what happened on caucus night. As chair of this party, I am deeply sorry for what happened and bear the



Iowa Democratic Party chairman Troy Price speaks to members of the media during a news conference, Monday, Feb. 10, 2020, in Des Moines, Iowa.

Associated Press

responsibility for any failures on behalf of the Iowa Democratic Party," Price wrote in a resignation letter a week and a half after Iowa's caucuses.

"While it is my desire to stay

in this role and see this process through to completion, I do believe it is time for the Iowa Democratic Party to begin looking forward, and my presence in my current role makes that

more difficult."

He said his departure would occur as soon as the state party elects a replacement, and he called an emergency Saturday meeting to do so.

After a breakdown in tallying the results on Feb. 3, it took until Feb. 6 for the state party, which operates the series of roughly 1,700 local meetings statewide, to issue what it said are complete results.

In those figures, released by the party, former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg leads Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders by two state delegate equivalents out of 2,152 counted. That is a margin of 0.09 percentage points.

The Associated Press said it was unable to declare a winner, based on the available information. The results as reported by the Iowa Democratic Party, the AP believes, may not be fully accurate.

Price had called the delays in reporting results "unacceptable." He said the party would conduct a "thorough, transparent and independent examination"

of what caused the delays. He apologized for the breakdown in the process. Both Buttigieg's and Sanders' campaigns requested a partial recanvass of the Iowa results, which the Iowa Democratic Party approved. The party says it expects the recanvass of more than 80 precincts to begin on Sunday and last two days. A recanvass is not a recount, but a check of the vote count against paper records created by caucus leaders to ensure the counts were reported accurately.

The party has said it will not change mistakes in the math and the only opportunity to correct it would be a recount, which would be the candidates' next option after the recanvass is completed.

Price was elected to his second term as chairman of the state party in December 2018. In a statement released after his reelection, he noted that he was "incredibly proud" of the success that Iowa Democrats had in the 2018 midterms and looked forward to building on it. □



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Girls sue to block participation of transgender athletes

By PAT EATON-ROBB

AP Sports Writer

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) —

The families of three female high school runners filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday seeking to block transgender athletes in Connecticut from participating in girls sports.

Selina Soule, a senior at Glastonbury High School, Chelsea Mitchell, a senior at Canton High School and Alanna Smith, a sophomore at Danbury High School are represented by the conservative nonprofit organization Alliance Defending Freedom. They argue that allowing athletes with male anatomy to compete has deprived them of track titles and scholarship opportunities. "Mentally and physically, we know the outcome before the race even starts," said Smith, who is the daughter of former Major League pitcher Lee Smith. "That biological unfairness doesn't go away because of what someone believes about gender identity. All girls deserve the chance to compete on a level playing field." The lawsuit was filed against the Connecticut Association of Schools-Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference and the boards of education in Bloomfield, Cromwell, Glastonbury, Canton and Danbury.

"Forcing girls to be spectators in their own sports is completely at odds with Title IX, a federal law designed to create equal opportunities for women in education and athletics," attorney Christiana Holcomb said. "Connecticut's policy violates that law and reverses nearly 50 years of advances for women."

The Connecticut Association of Schools-Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference says its policy follows a state anti-discrimination law that says students must be treated in school by the gender with which they identify and the group believes the policy is "appropriate under both state and federal law."

The lawsuit follows a Title IX complaint filed last June by the girls' families and the Al-



High school track athletes Alanna Smith, left, Selina Soule, center and Chelsea Mitchell prepare to speak at a news conference outside the Connecticut State Capitol in Hartford, Conn. Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020.

liance Defending Freedom with the U.S. Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, which is investigating the policy.

The lawsuit centers on two transgender sprinters, Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood, who have frequently outperformed their cisgender competitors.

The two seniors have combined to win 15 girls state indoor or outdoor championship races since 2017, according to the lawsuit. The three plaintiffs have competed directly against them, almost always losing to Miller and usually behind Yearwood. Mitchell finished third in the 2019 state championship in the girls 55-meter indoor track competition behind Miller and Yearwood.

"Our dream is not to come in second or third place, but to win fair and square," Mitchell said. "All we're asking for is a fair chance."

Yearwood, a senior at Cromwell High School, and Miller, a senior at Bloomfield High School, issued statements vehemently defending their right to run in girls events.

"I have faced discrimination in every aspect of my

life and I no longer want to remain silent," Miller said. "I am a girl and I am a runner. I participate in athletics just like my peers to excel, find community, and meaning in my life. It is both unfair and painful that my victories have to be attacked and my hard work ignored." Yearwood said she also is a girl and has been hurt by the efforts to "tear down my successes."

"I will never stop being me!" she said in her statement. "I will never stop running! I hope that the next generation of trans youth doesn't have to fight the fights that I have. I hope they can be celebrated when they succeed not demonized. For the next generation, I run for you!"

The American Civil Liberties Union said it will represent the transgender teens and defend the Connecticut policy in court. Attorney Chase Strangio, deputy director for Trans Justice with the ACLU LGBT & HIV Project, said transgender girls also are protected by Title IX.

"The idea that the law only protects the individuals with XX chromosomes as compared to individuals

with XY chromosomes is found nowhere in the legislative history of Title IX, in any implementing regulation or in any other aspect of the interpretation of Title IX over the last 50 years by the courts," he said.

The attorneys for Alliance Defending Freedom is asking the court to prevent the transgender girls from competing while the lawsuit moves forward. No hearing date on that request had been scheduled Wednesday, the day before the state's indoor track championships begin.

Connecticut is one of 17 states that allowed transgender high school athletes to compete without restrictions in 2019, according to Transathlete.com, which tracks state policies in high school sports across the country. Eight states had restrictions that make it difficult for transgender athletes to compete while in school, such requiring athletes to compete under the gender on their birth certificate, or allowing them to participate only after going through sex reassignment procedures or hormone therapies, according to Transathlete. □

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Judge sides with couples suing feds over marriage interviews

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — A federal judge in Maryland has banned immigration officials from arresting, detaining and deporting immigrants who are seeking legal status based on their marriages to U.S. citizens.

U.S. District Judge George J. Hazel issued the ruling Friday in a case filed by six couples accusing immigration officials of luring families to marriage interviews in Baltimore, only to detain the immigrant spouse for deportation. Hazel also ordered U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to release from custody immigrants married to U.S. citizens detained before they could complete the first step of the process to obtain legal residency.

Federal regulations allow U.S. citizens to try to legalize the status of spouses who have been living in the country illegally, including those with deportation orders. But the American Civil Liberties Union, which is representing the Maryland couples, has argued that a growing number of officers have "cruelly twisted" the rules by detaining immigrant spouses following the required marriage



In this June 21, 2019, file photo, Alyse Sanchez and her husband, Elmer Sanchez, pose for The Associated Press in Sandy Spring, Md.

interviews.

The months-long process typically requires couples to demonstrate the legitimacy of their marriage as part of the first step. If the couples pass an interview and earn other approvals, immigrant spouses eventually must travel abroad for a visa interview at a U.S. consulate. Only if they receive a visa can they return to the U.S. legally.

It's unclear how many people have become perma-

nent U.S. residents through the Obama-era regulations. They were created to significantly reduce the time that U.S. citizens are separated from immediate family members while trying to build a lawful immigration case from their home countries.

"(T)his order is in the public interest because it requires Respondents to comport with their own rules and regulations, bars arbitrary agency action toward vul-

nerable immigrant communities, and diminishes the emotional and financial impact on families participating in the provisional waiver process," Hazel wrote. He has not ruled on the class certification sought by the plaintiffs.

ICE did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The government in its response filed last year asked Hazel to dismiss the case arguing the court lacked jurisdiction and the

plaintiffs' "claims are not likely to be successful."

The ruling only applies to anyone living in Maryland, but the ACLU is also pursuing a similar complaint in Massachusetts. It is unclear how many people must be released from custody under Hazel's ruling.

Among the plaintiffs is Elmer Sanchez, a native of Honduras who was ordered in absentia to be deported in 2005 and married a U.S. citizen in 2013. He was taken into custody in May moments after he and his wife successfully finished their interview with an immigration officer in Baltimore.

He was released six weeks later after the ACLU sought an emergency order to prevent imminent deportation.

"These families endured trauma under the actions of ICE," ACLU of Maryland attorney Nick Steiner said in a statement Monday. "Their blatant disregard for their own rules and regulations that are meant to prevent family separation is unconstitutional. We are hopeful about the ruling and we believe it's a step in the right direction in recognizing that immigrants have constitutional protections too." □

2nd case of new coronavirus confirmed among China evacuees

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A second case of novel coronavirus has been confirmed in the U.S. among evacuees from China, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Wednesday.

The person was aboard a flight from the city of Wuhan that arrived at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

in Southern California last week, the CDC said.

The patient was in isolation at a San Diego hospital, UC San Diego Health confirmed.

Also in isolation is a woman who was mistakenly released because of a mislabeled sample that hadn't been tested for coronavirus. She was returned to the

hospital on Monday after testing positive for the virus. She was expected to make a full recovery.

The two patients "arrived on different planes and were housed in separate facilities; there are no epidemiologic links between them," a CDC statement said.

A third person whose test results are pending also is

hospitalized in isolation.

"We want to reassure our patients, their loved ones and the community at large that there is no exposure risk at any UC San Diego Health hospitals or clinics," the health system said in a statement.

Hundreds of people, including U.S. State Department employees and their

families, have arrived at military bases in California, Texas and Nebraska aboard chartered flights from Wuhan, a city of 11 million that is the epicenter for the virus. The only confirmed evacuee cases were at Miramar, where about 200 people are being held under quarantine until all are cleared. □

Baltimore shooting leaves 2 officers wounded; suspect dead

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — A shooting at a Baltimore apartment complex Wednesday ended with the death of a former state corrections official who had been under investigation and the wounding of two fugitive task force officers, authorities said.

The officers, one a Baltimore county detective and the other a detective in the city of Baltimore, were both assigned to the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force and were trying to serve a warrant out of Pennsylvania for attempted murder, said U.S. Marshals Service spokesman David Lutz.

"Our worst fears became a reality when shots were fired and the two officers were hit," Baltimore Police Commissioner Michael Harrison said of the male officers, without specifying who fired. He said the suspect was fatally shot, but he did not say by whom.

Neighbors at the scene of the shooting in the city's Frankford neighborhood told The Baltimore Sun that a suspect was "shooting back" at officers. A sheet at the scene covered what appeared to be a body.

One officer was shot in the leg and the other in the stomach, Lutz said. One of the officers had surgery, and both were awake but "still in very serious condition," said Dr. Thomas Scalea, physician-in-chief at the University of Maryland R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center.

Scalea said one of them was likely saved when fellow officers at the site applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding.

The male suspect was a

former state corrections official who had been under investigation, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan said at a news conference. He said the task force officers were going after "a really bad guy." Hogan did not release the suspect's identity or any other details.

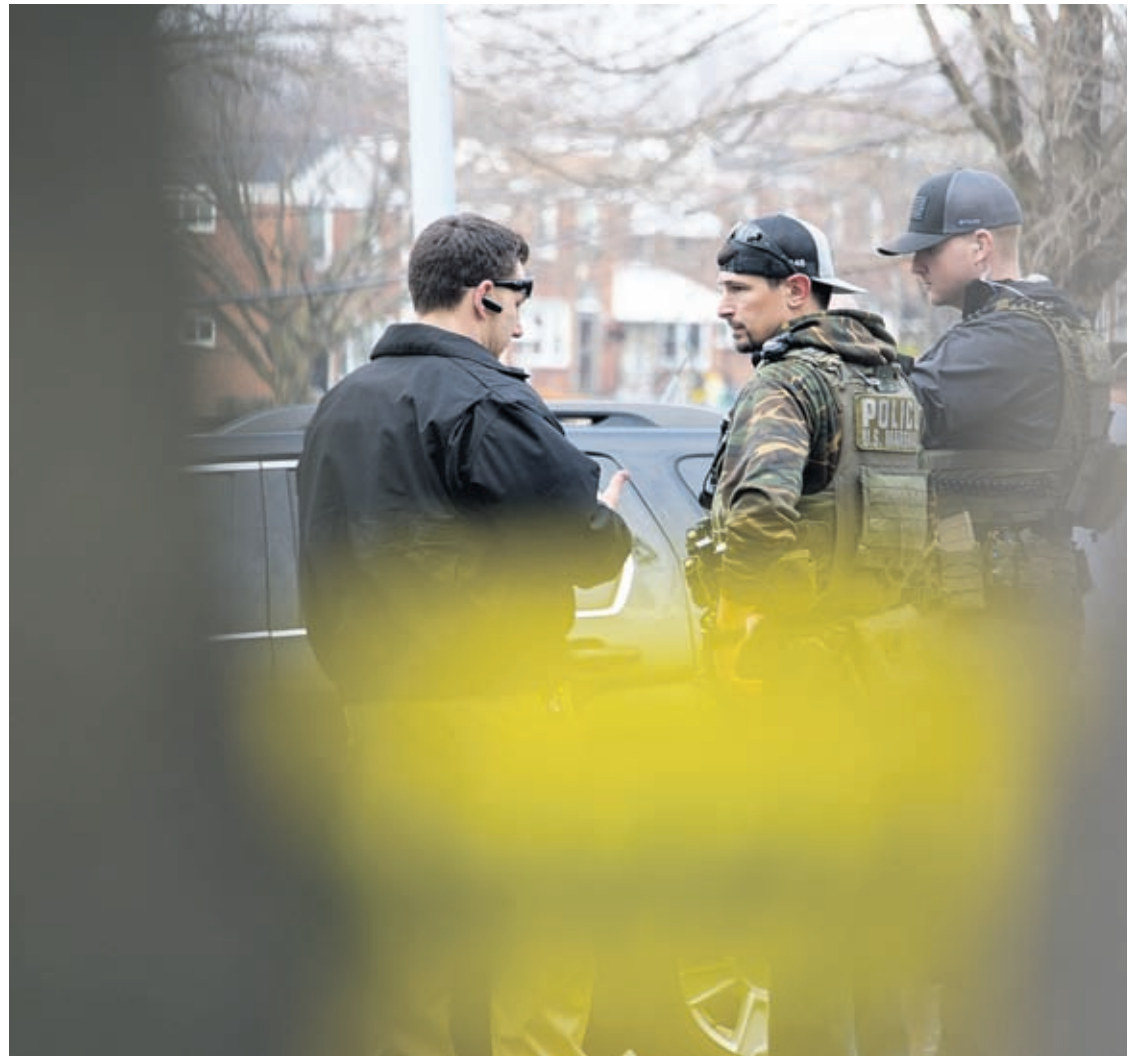
The shootings happened as officials have increased the presence of federal law enforcement officers in the city to stymie gang-related activity and violent crime as a whole.

In December, the Department of Justice announced a plan to increase the overall number of federal agents in Baltimore and add more officers to task forces. Months earlier, the department unveiled a task force focused on gun- and drug-related crime in the city.

Task force members, including agents from the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, work from a shared location to increase coordination. The task force to which the wounded officers belong also includes Secret Service agents.

"This was a perfect example of that joint task force executing warrants on violent criminals," Hogan said. "Unfortunately, it turned into a fairly tragic situation with wounded police officers."

Baltimore has been plagued with gun violence for decades. The city ended 2019 with 348 homicides, its fifth year in a row with more than 300 slayings. As of Wednesday morning, authorities had recorded 40 homicides and 56 nonfatal shootings in 2020. □



Law enforcement personnel work at the scene of a shooting, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, in Baltimore.

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E.U. plans trade sanctions against Cambodia over rights record

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union has declared its intention to slap sanctions on Cambodia over what it considers to be the country's human rights and trade union violations.

The EU's executive Commission said Wednesday that it has decided to withdraw key tariff preferences that amount to about one-fifth of the billion euros (\$1.1 billion) the Southeast Asian nation exports to the bloc each year. The sanctions are due to start in half a year unless the European Parliament and EU member states raise objections.

"The European Union will not stand and watch as democracy is eroded, human rights curtailed, and free debate silenced," the EU's foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, said. "Today's decision reflects our strong commitment to the Cambodian people, their rights, and the country's sustainable development. For the trade preferences to be reinstated, the Cambodian authorities need to take the necessary measures."

Cambodia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement it regretted the EU judgment, which it said was "triggered by many misperceptions and misunderstandings about the actual realities in Cambodia."

Despite describing the EU



In this Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020, photo, garment factory workers walk out at the end of their work shift close to Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

decision as politically driven and devoid of objectivity and impartiality, it said "Cambodia remains firmly committed to further enhancing its relations with the European Union based on the spirit of mutual respect and interest." Cambodia is one of several developing nations with whom the EU has an "Everything But Arms" — or EBA — program granting preferential access to the European market for products other than weapons.

The EU is Cambodia's largest trading partner, ac-

counting for 45% of Cambodian exports in 2018. Cambodia's exports to the EU, largely from the garment industry, were worth 5.4 billion euros (\$6 billion) in 2018, with 95.7% covered by EBA tariff preferences. Cambodia's government had anticipated the prospect of sanctions being imposed.

Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has been in power for 35 years and has vowed to serve two more 5-year terms in office, said Tuesday that his country would not cave in and that

the withdrawal of the trading privileges was manageable. Though the re-imposition of tariffs may hit the bottom line of Cambodian firms, he has said the EU would no longer be able to threaten or put any conditions on Cambodia. Speaking to villagers on the outskirts of the capital Phnom Penh, Hun Sen said it was more important for his country to maintain its independence and sovereignty than to retain the privileges.

His party swept all the seats in the National Assembly

in the 2018 polls, but drew condemnation from human rights groups and Western nations, who charged that the election was neither free nor fair, especially because a court ruling had dissolved the only credible opposition party. The courts are generally seen as being under the government's influence.

After the polls, the EU began the process to consider withdrawing preferential duty-free and quota-free status for imports from Cambodia.

Human rights groups had lobbied for the EU measure to put pressure on Hun Sen. "The EU's action on EBA is a slapdown of PM Hun Sen and his blatant disregard for human and labor rights," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch. "The EU bent over backwards to give Hun Sen opportunities to reverse his brutal clampdown on the political opposition, NGO activists, trade unionist and independent journalists, but over the past year he's doubled down on his repressive tactics."

"This is not the EU punishing Cambodia, but rather Hun Sen's arrogant indifference to human rights hurting the Cambodian people whose livelihoods may be impacted because of the EU's decision," Robertson said. □

Associated Press



U.S. Secretary for Defense Mark Esper, front center, shakes hands with British Defense Minister Ben Wallace during a group photo of NATO defense ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020.

Associated Press

By **LORNE COOK**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO is ready to expand its military training effort in Iraq, the alliance's top civilian offi-

cial said Wednesday, but the Iraqi government is not yet ready to approve the move. The Canada-led operation was launched in 2018 but suspended last

NATO eyes boosting Iraq army training, still needs Iraq's OK

month after a U.S. missile strike at Baghdad Airport killed Iran's top general and Iraq's government and lawmakers demanded that foreign troops leave. U.S. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has demanded that U.S. allies do more in the Mideast.

The NATO plan now is to move hundreds of trainers working with the international force fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq to NATO's own mission helping to build up the Iraqi army. No additional personnel would be deployed to the strife-torn country. After chairing talks

between NATO defense ministers, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that they "agreed in principle to enhance" the training effort in Iraq. "In the first instance, this will consist of taking on some of the global coalition's current training activities. Ministers also agreed to explore what more we can do," he told reporters. Asked why no agreement was reached Wednesday with the Iraqi government on green-lighting the move, Stoltenberg said only that "we are already in Iraq based on an invitation from Iraq and we will

only stay as long as we are welcome."

"Everything we do will be in close consultation and coordination with the Iraqi government," he added. Stoltenberg provided no details of how many troops might shift to the current training force numbering about 500 or what new activities they might eventually undertake.

He said more would be known once he meets with top officials in the anti-IS coalition in Munich, Germany on Friday. Officials have said "a couple of hundred" troops would move. □

SHOPPING RUE ROYALE SALVATORE FERRAGAMO BALLY TOUS SAN MARINA S A L U ART GALLERY (POP UP STORE)	SHOPPING VICTORIA SECRET MONARCH HOTLOOK GIORDANO PENHA	SHOPPING EASYHIRE MOBILITY SERVICES SHIVA'S GOLD & GEMS THE ISLANDER MAC SWAROVSKI PANACHE
 PALM BEACH PLAZA MALL		
BEAUTY CARE/ SPA AQUA NAILS AND SPA ARUBA HAPPY LASHES	ENTERTAINMENT CARIBBEAN CINEMAS ARUBA MEGA PLEX DREAM LAND ARUBA DREAMBOWL	F&B TASTE OF BELGIUM KALIN'S MEXICAN KONO PIZZA ARUBA THE HUB CAFÉ JOE'S RESTAURANT
RETAIL Mon to Sat 2pm to 10pm • Sundays 5pm to 10pm RESTAURANTS Taste of Belgium 8am to 11pm, other restaurants 4pm to 11pm		
Walking distance from high rise hotels		

Virus worries force cancellation of major tech show in Spain

By **KELVIN CHAN** and **MAE ANDERSON**
AP Business Writers

LONDON (AP) — Organizers of the world's biggest mobile technology fair are pulling the plug over worries about the viral outbreak from China.

The annual Mobile World Congress will no longer be held as planned in Barcelona, Spain, on Feb. 24-27.

"Global concern regarding the coronavirus outbreak, travel concern and other circumstances, make it impossible for the GSMA to hold the event," John Hoffman, head of the GSMA organizing body, said in a statement Wednesday.

The decision comes after dozens of tech companies and wireless carriers dropped out, with the latest cancelations by Nokia, Vodafone, Deutsche Telekom and Britain's BT on Wednesday. Other companies that dropped out earlier include Ericsson, Nokia, Sony, Amazon, Intel and LG. The companies cited concerns for the safety of staff and visitors.

Organizers and government officials had sought to hold out against growing pressure to cancel the annual tech extravaganza, which had been expected to draw more than 100,000 visitors from about 200 countries, including 5,000 to 6,000 from China. The show normally represents a huge source of revenue for hotels, restaurants and taxi companies. Authorities

have estimated the show was to generate 473 million euros (\$516 million) and more than 14,000 part-time jobs for the local economy. Spain's vice president, Carmen Calvo, said there was "no public health reason" to call off the show. She said Spain had a good health response system and was following all of the recommendations from the World Health Organization.

Dr. Mike Ryan, the WHO's emergencies chief, said before the cancellation that the show could have gone on.

He said that while no mass gathering is ever risk-free, with the potential for food poisoning, injuries or building collapse, most events "can continue if the proper measures can be applied." Spanish labor unions said that the show was called off due to the panic of the major technological companies. The CCOO union's regional leader, Javier Pacheco, denounced "the alarmist attitude of the technological companies that from their position of global supremacy don't care about the local impact."

But Tim Bajarin, president of consultancy Creative Strategies, said cancellation was prudent with all the unknowns surrounding how the new virus is spread and the fact that many companies had already pulled out.

These days, most big companies hold their own prod-



In this Feb. 25, 2019 photo, attendees walk to enter at the Mobile World Congress wireless show, in Barcelona, Spain. Organizers of the world's biggest mobile technology fair are pulling the plug over worries about the viral outbreak from China.

Associated Press

uct launch events anyway, as Samsung did Tuesday in San Francisco. But Bajarin said Mobile World Congress was still an opportunity for many people in the mobile industry to meet in one place. The GSMA, the wireless trade body that organizes the fair, had said it was meeting regularly with global and Spanish health experts and its partners to ensure the well-being of attendees. It had already urged participants to avoid handshakes and planned to step up cleaning and disinfecting and make sure speakers don't use the same microphone. Earlier Wednesday, Nokia said it had decided to with-

draw "after a full assessment of the risks related to a fast-moving situation." The company said "the health and well-being of employees was a primary focus" and that canceling its involvement was a "prudent decision."

The departures of Nokia and Ericsson had left China's Huawei, a major sponsor of the fair, as the only remaining major network gear maker still planning to attend. But even Huawei was scaling back by assigning European staff to the show instead. Its chairman had planned to hold a media briefing by video because he wouldn't get to Spain with enough time

to undergo a two-week self-quarantine period.

Organizers were caught between risking potential backlash over public health concerns if they went ahead or facing big financial losses if they canceled, said Stephen Mears, a research analyst at Futuresource Consulting.

Even before the cancellation, Mears said his five-person team was considering dropping out or shortening the trip as many participants they wanted to meet wouldn't be there, including those from China, which accounts for an increasing share of the global smartphone and mobile network industry. □

Burned India denim factory had single door reached by ladder

By **SHEIKH SAALIQ and MARTHA MENDOZA**

Associated Press Writers

NEW DELHI (AP) — Shouting and crying, workers in an Indian denim factory struggled to claw their way up a ladder to a door, their only exit as a fire blazed through fabric and machinery, officials said. Seven people died in the weekend blaze, and families were still waiting Wednesday to recover their relatives' bodies.

"Smoke kept billowing from the building as workers trapped inside screamed for help," said a witness who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was worried he'd lose his job.

The factory where the fire occurred, Nandan Denim, has ties to major U.S. retailers, according to its website. Nandan says it supplies jeans, denim and other garments to more than 20 global brands including U.S. companies such as Target, Ann Taylor, Mango and Wrangler, and its sister company supplies Walmart and H&M.

Some of the U.S. and multinational companies listed on the website said they were not actually customers, and many issued statements that strongly condemned dangerous work sites. Nandan Denim is one of the largest denim suppliers in the world.

The fire broke out Saturday in its two-story factory on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, a fast-growing city of 8.6 million in western Gujarat state. The city's industrial area, once covered with mountains of garbage, has slowly shifted into a hub for factories that make clothes sold to brands across the world.

Rajesh Bhatt, a senior fire official at the scene, said the factory had just one door that could only be reached by climbing a steep ladder. The workers, Bhatt said, were resting after long shifts when the fire started.

"There were hardly any means of escape from the blaze," he said.

Police investigators said the factory had violated

multiple regulations and the owner, a manager and a fire safety officer have been arrested.

Local safety and health au-

signments, stitching more than 400 pieces of garments a day. This forced many of them, mostly women, to work at a frantic

ing conditions in the textile factories across the city are grim, with rare inspections and few safety norms.

"These incidents are ir-

Joe Fresh, the fashion brand created for Canada's Loblaw Companies Ltd., said Nandan is not a supplier and doesn't make their goods.

But company officials said they believe one of their approved suppliers has purchased bulk quantities of denim from Nandan, and they are further investigating. Target and others did not respond to queries about whether their authorized suppliers may have purchased denim from Nandan.

Zara's parent company, Inditex, said Nandan Denim has produced 10,000 pairs of jeans for another of its brands, Lefties.

Nandan Denim's sister company, Nandan Terry, supplies towels and linens to many U.S. stores including Walmart and H&M, according to ImportGenius shipping records. Those corporations said they would also look into the situation.

Kontoor Brands, maker of Wrangler jeans, said they last worked with the factory in 2014.

"Our thoughts are with the workers and their families impacted by the tragic situation," Kontoor said in a statement.

Nandan Denim reported revenues of \$218 million last year, and says it exports to more than 20 countries and has more than 4,500 employees. Shares of the company were tumbling after news of the fire.

Scott Nova, executive director of Washington-based Workers Rights Consortium, said, "It does not cost much to put fire exits in a textile factory."

"Brands and retailers are well aware of the safety risks in the garment and textile industry in India, yet they choose to do business with unsafe suppliers," he said. "The result is that workers are losing their lives in factory disasters that could easily have been prevented."

Forty-three people died in a December fire at a factory which produced handbags, caps and other garments in New Delhi. □



This Saturday, Feb. 8, 2020 photo, shows the damage after a fire broke out at Nandan Denim, one of the largest denim suppliers in the world, in Ahmedabad, India.

Associated Press

thorities asked the company to close until further notice. Its licenses have been suspended, and Nandan Denim has agreed to pay the families of those killed a reported \$14,000 each.

Purvee, a factory spokeswoman who goes by only one name, did not explain how it started but called the fire "unfortunate." Factory officials would not comment on whether they had undergone required audits and reviews.

Surviving workers, who are paid about 35 cents per hour, said conditions had been dangerous.

"We work almost 14 hours a day. But do we have an option?" said Vimalbhai, a textile worker who goes by one name. "Every once a while there is a fire in some factory or the other. Nobody cares and we keep on working."

Some workers said they were given impossible as-

pace, often forgoing meal breaks or using the toilet, survivors said.

One victim, Dayabhai Makwana, made it out alive, but went back in to rescue co-workers and perished.

"I wish he hadn't gone back to save his colleagues," said his grieving brother, Dhanabai Makwana. He said more than 30 workers were in the factory at the time of the blaze.

Sobbing families were still waiting Wednesday outside one of the city's hospital mortuaries to identify bodies charred beyond recognition. They were told DNA confirmation would not come before Friday.

"We can't even mourn our dead because we don't know which one is ours," said Mahesh Patel, whose nephew lost his life in the blaze.

Amar Barot of the Textile Labour Association said work-

reversible and only strict monitoring by the government and its agencies can help prevent such disasters," Barot said.

He also said labor unions across the region have been declining over the last few decades, making it difficult for the voices of workers to be heard.

Some of the major brands contacted, including Ann Taylor, Target, Zara and Pull&Bear, said they are not customers and don't have a relationship with Nandan Denim.

Target said it is working to get its name off their website and out of their annual reports.

Because thread, fabric cutting, weaving and sewing can be done in different locations, apparel supply chains can be complicated and it becomes nearly impossible to track a specific item to a specific factory.



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Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes part in a joint press conference with President of Senegal Macky Sall at the Presidential Palace in Dakar, Senegal on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020.

Associated Press

Canadian PM Trudeau raises gay rights with Senegal leader

By **BABACAR DIONE**

Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised Senegal's criminalization of homosexuality during his visit to the West African nation on Wednesday, but Senegal's leader told journalists afterward that "we're comfortable with our laws." The exchange between Trudeau and Senegalese President Macky Sall highlighted the impasse the United States, Canada and other Western nations have had in persuading Senegal and most African countries not to jail gays and lesbians. Trudeau told journalists he was "a great defender of human rights" and so had to raise the issue. "We've talked about it, and we know that Senegal is a leader in terms of democracy and in terms of values. But we all have work to do. In any case, we've had good discussions with Macky Sall," Trudeau said at a new conference in the capital of Dakar.

Senegal is a moderate, predominantly Muslim na-

tion where homosexuality is criminalized and punishable by up to five years in prison. Prosecution are rare but discrimination in the country's traditional communities runs deep. The bodies of gay men have even been dug out of Muslim cemeteries after their families had laid them to rest there. The Senegalese president said his country respected human rights but he emphasized that no changes on laws regarding homosexuality would be forthcoming.

"We cannot ask Senegal to legalize homosexuality and organize tomorrow's Gay Pride," he said. "It is not possible. Our society does not accept it."

"It is our way of living and being. It has nothing to do with homophobia," he added. Trudeau spent Wednesday meeting with Senegal's president and visiting Goree Island, a site often frequented by visiting Western leaders because of its historical significance as a place where African slaves were forced to depart for the New World. □



In this July 9, 2018 file photo, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir attends a ceremony for Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey.

Associated Press

Rights group: Leader says Sudan to cooperate fully with ICC

By **SAMY MAGDY**

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's leader said Wednesday the government will "fully" cooperate with the International Criminal Court's efforts to prosecute those wanted for war crimes and genocide in connection with the Darfur conflict, according to an international rights group. Transitional authorities announced Tuesday they agreed to hand over former autocrat president Omar al-Bashir to The Hague-based court along with other former officials wanted by the ICC.

"We agreed no one is above the law, and that people will be brought to justice, be it in Sudan or outside Sudan with the help of the ICC," Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, head of the country's transitional Sovereign Council, was quoted as saying by Human Rights Watch.

Burhan didn't mention al-

Bashir by name, according to the HRW statement. His comments came during a meeting with Kenneth Roth, HRW's executive director, and Mausi Segun, the group's Africa director Wednesday in Sudan's capital, Khartoum. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok also confirmed the government's commitment to cooperate with the ICC, HRW said.

Mohammed Hassan al-Taishi, a member of the Sovereign Council and a government negotiator, said Tuesday the transitional authorities agreed with rebel groups in Darfur to hand over those wanted by the ICC to face justice before the tribunal.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement that Sudan's announcement could mean that al-Bashir "will finally face justice for grave international crimes in Darfur." Al-Bashir, 76, faces three counts of geno-

cide, five counts of crimes against humanity and two counts of war crimes for his alleged role in leading the deadly crackdown on a rebel insurgency in Darfur. The indictments were issued in 2009 and 2010, marking the first time the global court had charged a suspect with genocide.

"Victims and their families have waited more than 15 years for justice for widespread atrocities committed in Darfur," said Roth. "Now they may finally see former president al-Bashir and the other ICC suspects in court."

The ICC has indicted two other senior figures in al-Bashir's regime: Abdel-Rahim Muhammad Hussein, interior and defense minister during much of the conflict, and Ahmed Haroun, a senior security chief at the time and later the leader of al-Bashir's ruling party. Both have been under arrest in Khartoum since al-Bashir's fall. □

Argentina and IMF discuss debt in shadow of 2001 crisis

By DÉBORA REY and
CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — Argentina has been here before: recession, growing poverty, high inflation, billions of dollars in debt, a looming deadline for repayment and simmering anger toward the International Monetary Fund. This is a big week for one of Latin America's biggest economies, which is hosting an IMF team for talks on restructuring \$44 billion in debt owed to the lender. All involved are anxious to avoid a replay of 2001, when Argentina defaulted on about \$100 billion in debt during the worst economic crisis — and there have been many — in its history.

Once again, Argentina doesn't have the cash to pay creditors, and is desperate for relief from its total debt burden, also valued at around \$100 billion.



People eat food served up by members of political parties and social movements as part of their protest against the visit of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation, featuring a banner that reads in Spanish "The debt is with the people, not the IMF," in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020.

It's a balance for President Alberto Fernández, who seeks a deal with the IMF that does not alienate his leftist base, as represented by his deputy and former

president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

"It will be a frantic negotiation to put an end to austerity, restructure commitments with the fund, and

get the latter's green light to pursue a renegotiation with private bondholders, all by 31 March 2020," Verisk Maplecroft, a consulting company based in Britain, said in a report.

"I think the fund is willing to help Argentina, but in order to do that, it's necessary for the Argentine authorities to steer away from interventionist and heterodox policies and show clear willingness and ability to improve the fiscal situation in no more than two to three years," said Alberto Ramos, chief Latin America economist for Goldman Sachs.

At the time of the 2001 default, the relationship between Argentina and the IMF grew increasingly strained.

The IMF later acknowledged shortcomings, including a failure to identify vulnerabilities in the Argentine economy during its boom years.

Martín Guzmán, the economy minister, planned to offer details of a plan for debt restructuring in an address to Congress later Wednesday.

Some demonstrators who favor a hard line on Argentina's creditors marched toward the local offices of the IMF in Buenos Aires in protest.

"When workers in Argentina hear the term IMF, they know that long periods of

darkness lie ahead," said Damaris Rolón, a protest leader. He said the IMF should get out of Argentina and that the government shouldn't pay back its debt. A new IMF program would reassure bondholders that Fernández has a good plan to balance the budget, lower inflation and pay debts, said Benjamin Gedan, director of the Argentina Project at the Wilson Center in Washington. "Politically, it might be appealing for Fernández to demand concessions not only from private creditors, but also from the IMF," Gedan wrote in an email to The Associated Press.

"After all, the Fund is loathed by Argentines who remember its role in the 2001 economic catastrophe," he said. "But a clash with the IMF would be foolhardy, and immensely complicate Argentina's efforts to claw its way out of its latest debt morass."

President Fernández took office in December after an election win that spooked markets fearing a return to leftist economic policies of the past. During her presidency, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner had implemented interventionist policies that were widely blamed for economic problems.

Yet the predecessor of the current president, Mauricio Macri, had fallen into disfavor after obtaining a record financing deal with the IMF in 2018. Argentines chafed under the austerity measures required as part of the agreement, the currency plunged and daily life got worse.

Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF's managing director, said her organization shares the same goals as Argentina's government.

"In this regard, the measures adopted thus far go in the direction of restoring macroeconomic stability and protecting the poor," Georgieva said after meeting Argentina's economy minister in Rome last week. Yet many Argentines and foreign investors wonder: is a 2001-style scenario unfolding all over again? □

Nicaragua creates new fuel firms after December U.S. sanctions

By GABRIELA SELSER

Associated Press

MANAGUA, Nicaragua

(AP) — Nicaragua's Parliament approved the creation Tuesday of four state companies that will handle the importation, storage, distribution and sales of oil and gas, two months after the country's main energy company was sanctioned by Washington for allegedly laundering money for family members of President Daniel Ortega and then sold to the government days later.

The measure passed without debate, analysis in committee or consultation with other government or business entities under rules for urgent legislation in a Parliament controlled by Ortega's Sandinista party.

Wálmaro Gutiérrez, a Sandinista who heads the legislature's economic commission, called the decision "wise" and said it

would "guarantee better service, high-quality and efficiency," through specialization by the different companies.

Members of the opposition, who have accused Ortega of running the petroleum sector without being accountable to Parliament, saw self-interest behind the measure.

Creation of the new companies is an attempt "to evade the U.S. Treasury Department sanctions, in case they sanction them again," said lawmaker Jimmy Blandón of the opposition Liberal Constitutionalist Party.

Treasury levied the sanctions Dec. 12 on the fuel distributor DNP, accusing it of being used by members of the Ortega family for their personal enrichment.

DNP, along with Albanisa, had commercialized crude from Venezuela since 2007, the year Ortega returned to power. Al-

banisa was founded the same year and was linked to Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, also sanctioned by Washington in 2019.

Days after the December sanctions were announced, Ortega's government nationalized the company and took over its assets — a move that was also fast-tracked by Parliament.

The four new entities are known as Enigas, Eniplanh, Enicom and Enih, the latter of which focuses on exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

Sandinista lawmaker Edwin Castro said that in the case of Enih, the government offered incentives for exploration on Nicaragua's Pacific coast, though without identifying what company benefited.

"It is possible that if we do not find oil, at least we may find gas," Castro said. □

LOCAL



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ORANJESTAD — Colombian Emeralds International's mission is to offer customers fine jewelry of exceptional quality and value, through an award-winning customer service experience.



It's time to relax

EAGLE BEACH — Matthew DeChiaro from Massachusetts was recently honored as Goodwill Ambassador due to his 20th consecutive visit to Aruba.

Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority conducted the ceremony which was held at the Divi Village resort.

DeChiaro loves coming to the island for its safety, beautiful beaches, great family time and mostly for relaxation.

Ferry Zievinger, GM of Divi Village Resort together with Carol Jansen and Gloria Sandersan were also present at the ceremony to celebrate with DeChiaro this great occasion. □



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AAR's First Island Wide Open House

ORANJESTAD — The Association of Aruban Realtors (AAR) is pleased to announce that they will be holding their first Island Wide Open House. This open house allows visitors to walk through several properties that are for sale and they will be guided by a knowledgeable realtor.

Open House Events are increasingly popular in the United States and Europe as they offer a new way of displaying real estate to potential buyers.

This event gives visitors the opportunity to look at several different properties around the island of Aruba in different price ranges.

Features and benefits of this Open House include the following:

- It allows you to gauge the level of interest in different houses in Aruba and ease the process of viewing the best property before making a decision.
- It allows you to pass by any of the houses and

view them without the need to make an appointment.

- Real estate agents will be present at every home and they will guide you and make the experience enjoyable.

This Open House will take place on Saturday February 15, 2020 starting at 10AM until 12PM.

There will be around 30 houses open to the public and you could walk



through them with a realtor present to answer any questions you may have.

For more information on AAR's first Open House Event, visit our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/aar.arubarealestate/>

ASSOCIATION OF ARUBAN REALTORS

ISLAND WIDE OPEN HOUSE

February 15, 2020
10 AM - 12 PM



Look at all the properties listed on our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/aar.arubarealestate/>

About AAR

AAR is the only Real Estate association in Aruba. All members must adhere to a strict code of conduct and ethics. Members must be knowledgeable about the real estate market and the applicable laws. Only screened and reputable real estate offices can become members. The fact that your broker is a member of this association offers several advantages for you as buyer or seller as they offer expertise, reliability, and certainty. You can find property listings from all brokers that are members of the Association of Aruban Realtors (AAR) on our website www.arubalistings.com. Valuable members of the association include Sotheby's, Alto Vista International Realty, Aruba Brokers, Aruba Home Finders, Aruba Living Today, Aruba Massari Rentals, Aruba Top Homes, Azure, Cas Bon, Century 21, Clearly Realty, Coldwell Banker, Executive Real Estate, Gold Coast, Moresco, MPG Real Estate, O condominium, Palm Aruba, Prima Casa, RE/MAX, RealTeza, Riva Real Estate, Sage Realty, and Homes by Jenn.

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The Lazy Lizard | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa**Coming Soon:** The Brownstone Ribs & Seafood and
Shalom Hair & Nail Bar**Local artist Grace Ashruf supports the Foundation for Women in Difficulties**


ORANJESTAD — Local painter Grace Ashruf decided to support the foundation that helps women in difficulties, called Fundacion pa Hende Muhe den Dificultad.

She donated a part of the sales of her exhibition 'Balance' which showcased 42 paintings in the month of November last year. The artist makes it a customs to support a local foundation each time she has an exposition running.

Ashruf is a successful artist in Aruba but also abroad where she exhibited her art in cities like New York and Miami. Her newest collection 'Balance' symbolizes the circle of the moon and the sun that stand for our world, inside and outside. The president and Coordinator of the Foundation for Women in Difficulties happily accepted Ashruf's donation in her exposition gallery. □







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PALM BEACH — Your significant other is everything to you and this special day in the year you want her or him to feel how much they mean to you. The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba knows how to create unique and memorable experiences. With their exclusive and romantic set-ups for Valentine's Day you can be assured to make it a one-lifetime experience. Because (s)he is worth it!

The engagement

The Divi Sushi Bar & Lounge is already a lovable setting with a view to celebrate. Imagine the sun set on this beautiful terrace with superb service and delectable dining while you are facing the white-sanded beach and you are seated in the sophisticated surroundings of The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba. Show her or him that only the best is good enough!

The proposal

An assorted sushi platter, a bottle of Moët & Chandon, two cocktails from the menu and two cocktails to share is what is proposed to you within the Sunset Dinner for Two. Would you rather be right on the beach in a Private Cabana? Consider it a dream they'll make come true with the Starlight Valentine proposal. You are enchanted with a welcome drink and delicious four-course dinner. You only need to say YES!

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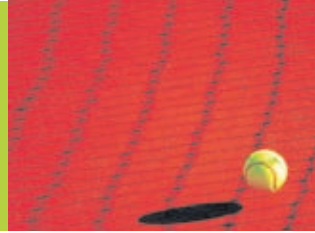
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SPORTS



U.S. to use WNBA players in 3-on-3 Olympic qualifier

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — USA Basketball will have a team of WNBA players available to qualify for 3-on-3 at the Olympics. Kelsey Plum, Allisha Gray, Katie Lou Samuelson and Stefanie Dolson headline the 11 players invited to a training camp this week in Chicago. From the pool, the selection committee will choose four women to represent the U.S. at the qualifying tournament in India from March 18-22. "I'm very excited to have the opportunity," said Plum, who helped the Americans win gold in the 5-on-5 World Championship in 2018. "Anytime you put on a USA jersey it's a great thing." The U.S. spent the last few months getting the professional players into tournaments to move them up in the FIBA 3-on-3 rankings. While the players have a lot of experience playing 5-on-5, they are still relatively new to 3-on-3. "It's definitely a quicker and more fast-paced game," Samuelson said. "You need to quickly transition from offense to defense." The 3-on-3 rules are made for up-tempo competition. There's one 10-minute period, making 3-on-3 a lot quicker than its 5-on-5 counterpart. A game can end even sooner if a team scores 21 points in less than 10 minutes. If the game is tied after 10 minutes, it goes into overtime, where the first team scoring two points wins. There's also a 12-second shot clock.

Continued on Page 18

OUT OF THE WOODS

Woods, Thomas spending time off course and in same pairing

Tiger Woods hits his second shot on the seventh hole during the Genesis Invitational pro-am golf event at Riviera Country Club, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

Associated Press
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Woods, Thomas spending time off course and in same pairing

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tiger Woods and Justin Thomas are separated by about 17 years on the calendar and 70 victories on the PGA Tour, neither of which has kept them from becoming friends away from golf.

Thomas first met Woods in 2015 on the range at The Players Championship his rookie year. They grew closer a year later during some of the darker moments for Woods when his back was killing him, he wasn't playing and had days where it was tough to walk. His future was never more uncertain.

Both are represented by Excel Sports, and Thomas asked agent Mark Steinberg if it was OK to reach out to Woods. Thomas and Rickie Fowler became regular visitors.

"I was thinking about him and wanted to hang out," Thomas said. "That's when we became close. He couldn't do much. We wanted to make sure he was still positive, not getting down on himself, that we were still believing in him." Now they seem to spend as much time on the golf course.

Woods and Thomas will be playing together the open-



Justin Thomas watches his approach shot on the 13th hole during the Genesis Invitational pro-am golf event at Riviera Country Club, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

ing two rounds of the Genesis Invitational, joined this year by Steve Stricker, as Woods goes for his record 83rd victory on the PGA Tour. It's the third straight year that Thomas and Woods have been in the weekday groups at Riviera, which probably isn't a coincidence, especially now that Woods is the tournament host.

Thomas was asked late last year why Woods likes him.

"I don't know," he said. "To be honest, because I don't view him as Tiger Woods. I view him as one of my buddies. I needle him. To be perfectly honest, I don't kiss his (behind) like some people do. I absolutely respect him so much, and how much time he's given me. But it's just two buddies hanging out."

They seem to hang out a lot inside the ropes. Even though Thomas and Woods

have played in the same event only 35 times since Thomas joined the PGA Tour in 2015, they already have played together in 14 rounds.

More alarming is the record. In the early years for Woods, it was rare for anyone to have a higher percentage posting the lower score. In the 14 times Woods and Thomas have been in the same group, Thomas has a 10-1-3 advantage.

Associated Press

The only time Woods got him was the final round in the Bahamas last year, and Thomas is still fuming about that. Looking back, he was more caught up in beating Woods than winning the tournament, and he fears it cost him.

They started out two shots behind Gary Woodland, playing a few groups ahead of the leaders.

"I was so wrapped up in beating him that I forgot about the tournament," Thomas said. "I was tied for the lead with seven holes left. All I had to do was go 2 or 3 under. I just remember getting done and I was so mad. I've played a lot of golf with him, but never on a Sunday where we both had a chance."

As playing captain at the Presidents Cup a week later, Woods took Thomas as his partner in two team matches, which they won. Woods said on Tuesday that he carried Thomas in those two matches, which got no argument from the youngster.

Thomas replied Wednesday that if he hadn't made a 15-foot birdie putt on the last hole of the second session, Woods would not have gone undefeated for the week.

There's the needle. □

U.S. to use WNBA players in 3-on-3 Olympic qualifier

Continued from Page 17

Plum and Samuelson, who just finished a stint with the 5-on-5 U.S. national team, weren't worried about the lack of 3-on-3 experience. "We have time to play together and grow," said Samuelson, who won a gold medal for the U.S. at the Under-18 World Cup in 2013.

Two of the four members of the qualifying team must be in America's top 10 for total points. Plum is currently second followed by Gray, Samuelson, Kelly Faris and Layshia Clarendon. Dolson is 10th on the list.

The selection committee can choose anyone else from the pool for the other two spots on the qualifying



In this Feb. 2, 2020, file photo, USA Women's National Team guard Kelsey Plum drives the ball upcourt during an NCAA women's exhibition basketball game against Louisville in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

team. Oregon's Sabrina Ionescu is No. 1 on the points list for the U.S., but she won't be available as her college team will be in the middle of the NCAA Tournament.

The top three teams from the qualifying tournament in each gender will advance to the Tokyo Games. If the Americans qualify, their rosters could be a little

different for the Olympics. As of now, two players must be a country's top 10 as of May 22. The other two players on the team must have a minimum of 3,600 points. FIBA has changed who is eligible a few times over the past year.

The American women have dominated 5-on-5 at the Olympics, winning six consecutive gold medals. They've struggled lately in 3-on-3. They finished fifth in 2018 after not qualifying in 2017. They didn't qualify for last year's World Cup, either.

While the women's qualifying team will be made up of pros, the men's team will have seasoned 3-on-3 players in the mix. Robbie Hummel, Kareem Maddox

and Damon Huffman lead the way.

That trio helped the U.S. men win their first 3-on-3 world title last year as the Americans finished 7-0 in the tournament.

"This is an extremely exciting time for USA Basketball as we prepare for the first-ever 3x3 Olympic Qualification Tournament. This training camp is the next step towards earning a berth into the Olympic Games, so it is incredibly important," said USA Basketball CEO Jim Tooley. "Many of our country's top available 3x3 players will be participating, and USA Basketball will be looking to select the best USA 3x3 teams possible for the Olympic Qualifying Tournaments." □

Harden scores 42, Rockets cool off Celtics with 116-105 win

By The Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — James Harden scored 42 points, Russell Westbrook had 36 and the Houston Rockets snapped Boston's seven-game win streak with a 116-105 victory over the Celtics on Tuesday night. Houston broke it open with a 15-2 run that made it 116-98 with about two minutes left. Harden scored six points during the decisive stretch, and Danuel House had five.

Boston had two turnovers and missed numerous shots to allow the Rockets to turn the close game into a one where coach Mike D'Antoni cleared the bench for the last minute with the game well in hand.

Harden had eight rebounds and seven assists, and Westbrook finished with 10 rebounds and five assists.

Gordon Hayward had 20 points in Boston's first loss since Jan. 26. Jaylen Brown scored 19, and Jayson Tatum had 15 on 5-for-15 shooting.

76ERS 110, CLIPPERS 103

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Ben Simmons had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, pushing the Sixers to the win.

Joel Embiid also scored 26 points and Tobias Harris added 17 points and 12 boards for Philadelphia, which has the NBA's best home record at 25-2. Josh Richardson scored 17 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter.

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 30 points, and reserve Landry Shamet scored 19 against his former team.

Richardson nailed his third 3-pointer of the quarter to give Philadelphia a 102-94 lead with 4:44 left. Then he scored on a driving left-handed layup and made the free throw to complete the 3-point play, extending the lead to 11.

PELICANS 138, TRAIL BLAZERS 117

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Zion Williamson scored a season-high 31 points, powering New Orleans to the victory.

Playing 28 minutes in just his ninth NBA game, Williamson used his 6-foot-6, 285-pound frame, quick feet and explosive vertical to have his way with every defender Portland tried against him.

JJ Redick scored 20 and Josh Hart had 17 points for New Orleans, which trailed by as many as 16 in the first quarter before taking command en route to a third straight victory.

Portland star Damian Lillard scored 20 points — less than half of his 42-point average over his previous 10 games. But his playing time was limited in the fourth quarter when the Pelicans, who led by as many as 26, had put the game out of reach.

WIZARDS 126, BULLS 114

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brad-

ley Beal scored 30 points, and the Wizards held off Zach LaVine and the Bulls for the victory.

LaVine scored 19 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulls whittled an 18-point deficit down to six points. Tomas Satoransky added 19 points for Chicago, which enters the All-Star break on a six-game losing streak. The Bulls had won four straight versus Washington.

SPURS 114, THUNDER 106

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 14 rebounds, and the Spurs stopped a five-game slide.

Dejounte Murray also scored 25 points for San Antonio, which had dropped eight of 10 overall. Patty Mills had 20 points, and fel-



Houston Rockets' James Harden (13) drives toward the basket as Boston Celtics' Kemba Walker defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020, in Houston.

Associated Press

low reserve Derrick White finished with 17.

Led by Aldridge and Murray, the Spurs made 25 of 27 foul shots.

Oklahoma City dropped

its second straight after a stretch of nine wins in 10 games. Chris Paul scored 31 points for the Thunder, and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 17. □

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Browns' Garrett reinstated by NFL from indefinite suspension

By **TOM WITHERS**
AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Myles Garrett is allowed to play and chase quarterbacks again after the NFL reinstated the Browns' star defensive end from his indefinite suspension for a vicious attack on Pittsburgh QB Mason Rudolph last season.

The league lifted its ban Wednesday on Garrett, who ripped off Rudolph's helmet and smashed him over the head with it during a Nov. 14 game on national television. Garrett missed Cleveland's final six games and his loss was a major blow to the Browns, who went 2-4 without him, finished 6-10, fired coach Freddie Kitchens and saw general manager John Dorsey resign.

On Monday, Garrett met with Commissioner Roger Goodell and other league officials in the final step before he was cleared to return. He can participate in all of the Browns' offseason



In this Nov. 20, 2019, file photo, Cleveland Browns star defensive end Myles Garrett leaves an office building in New York.

Associated Press

activities and that's a big relief as the team is undergoing another new start under coach Kevin Stefanski. Garrett is cleared to return to all activities with the Browns.

"We welcome Myles back to our organization with open arms," Browns vice president of football operations and GM Andrew Berry

said. "We know he is grateful to be reinstated, eager to put the past behind him and continue to evolve and grow as a leader. We look forward to having his strong positive presence back as a teammate, player and person in our community."

Garrett did not release a statement, but he posted

a meme on his Twitter account of a scene from the film "John Wick" with the subtitle: "But now yeah, I'M **THINKING I'M BACK!!!**"

Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield offered his support, tweeting: "welcome back big fella!!!"

As the Browns were wrapping up a rare win over the Steelers in a Thursday night matchup, Garrett, the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2017, pulled down Rudolph after a pass attempt and the two wrestled on the ground. Rudolph tried to pull off Garrett's helmet but couldn't. Garrett ripped off Rudolph's helmet and swung and struck him with it, triggering a brawl between the teams.

Garrett paid dearly for his misstep. He was fined \$45,623 and lost \$1.14 million in game checks. His reputation also took a shot and he'll have to watch his behavior going forward as another violent incident could result in even harsher

discipline by the league.

Garrett's suspension is the longest for a single behavior in league history. Tennessee's Albert Haynesworth was suspended five games for stomping on a player's helmet-less head in 2006.

Garrett appealed his ban and Garrett told independent officer James Thrash during his hearing that Rudolph had used a slur during their skirmish. However, Thrash upheld the decision and Garrett was done for the season. The league also suspended Steelers guard Maurkice Pouncey for three games (the penalty was later reduced to two) for punching and kicking Garrett, and Browns defensive lineman Larry Ogunjobi was suspended one game. Garrett was having a strong third season as a pro, but he was flagged for some unnecessary roughness penalties early in the season. He finished with 10 sacks in 10 games. □

Analysis: Offseason Fix: Where are the free QBs headed?

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

Now that we know Philip Rivers won't be leading the Chargers into SoFi Stadium in September, the muddled waters of NFL quarterbacking have been cleared a bit. Just a little bit. Indeed, not knowing where Rivers might be headed, if anywhere, in 2020 doesn't simplify things at all. Nearly every one of the NFL's eight divisions has a team or teams with a quarterback quandary. With the exception of the NFC West, it's easy to argue that there's a major hole behind center somewhere. As in ...

NFC EAST

The one team that seemingly had its quarterback situation on solid ground heading into 2019 is the club with the question mark in this division. Is Dallas sold on Dak Prescott? At least enough so to commit more than \$100 million to him, particularly in light of the Cowboys' second-half meltdown? Philadelphia is in fine shape after the way Carson Wentz performed down the stretch with basically half a roster. The Eagles need a veteran backup, though, as do the Giants for Daniel Jones. Washington's Dwayne Haskins is raw but with tons of upside.

NFC SOUTH

Assuming Drew Brees resigns with New Orleans — he's pretty much said he will — and Teddy Bridgewater hits the open market, the only unknown in this sector is in Carolina. Cam Newton's recent history of injury and unimpressive performance, combined with a hefty contract, plus a rebuilding project under new coach Matt Rhule almost guarantees he will be on the move. Yet, the Panthers have no clue who should replace him, especially after Kyle Allen struggled late in the season. Matt Ryan had a strong year despite Atlanta's struggles. Tampa Bay seems trapped into at least another season with Jameis Winston by franchising him to delay a long-term decision until coach Bruce Arians is certain Win-



In this Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady walks to the sideline after throwing an interception late in the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the Tennessee Titans in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

ston is (or isn't) the guy.

NFC NORTH

Except in Minnesota, where Kirk Cousins is ensconced, there are some uncertainties here. Green Bay must decide if now is the time to find a down-the-road successor to Aaron Rodgers, a dicey proposition because Rodgers has given no indication he's contemplating the end of his Hall of Fame-caliber career. Chicago must figure out if Mitchell Trubisky is the solution. A wise move would be to bring in strong competition for the slumping Trubisky: Marcus Mariota, Andy Dalton, maybe even Nick Foles or Rivers? Detroit, however, has the biggest problem. No longer is Matthew Stafford its Mr. Indestructible, and the Lions need some serious roster revamping. Stafford deserves better than spending the rest of his career with little chance to compete for a title.

NFC WEST

Seattle: Time to talk Hall of Fame for Russell Wilson. Arizona: Top offensive rookie Kyler Murray will likely grow leaps and bounds in his second season.

San Francisco: Jimmy

Garoppolo isn't a superstar, but the Niners could win it all with him. Los Angeles Rams: We're not sold on Jared Goff, but Sean McVay apparently is.

AFC EAST

Buffalo (Josh Allen) and the Jets (Sam Darnold) have their young QBs, though Allen needs to make better decisions and Darnold must stay healthier than he's managed so far. There's really no excuse for Miami to not draft a quarterback, and veteran Ryan Fitzpatrick would be a good tutor for Tua. That leaves New England. Say what?

Yep, after two decades of unmatched success, Tom Brady is without a contract. Owner Robert Kraft publicly supports bringing back the six-time champion, even if his coach has yet to be so supportive. Brady moving on is the most intriguing story line of the offseason, though his winding up with a two-year deal (second season voidable) with the Patriots for massive money is where the smart dollars lay.

AFC SOUTH

No worries for Houston: De-

shaun Watson is a star worthy of building around.

Indianapolis seems to feel the same way about Jacoby Brissett, at least for 2020, the final season of his deal. If Jacksonville opts to go with Gardner Minshew after his sometimes impressive rookie year, it's likely Foles will be on the move yet again. He costs far too much for the Jaguars to keep him as a backup, although other options also are expensive.

Tennessee learned that Mariota is not its man, and Ryan Tannehill performed so well — leading the league in QB rating — that he'll get a contract somewhere. Most likely in Music City, but he's never had such value.

AFC NORTH

Baltimore has Lamar Jackson. Enough said. Cleveland has Baker Mayfield, though that's hardly the certainty for success it seemed after 2018.

Joe Burrow is headed for Cincinnati, though he might have considered the XFL or CFL as a better option. That leaves Pittsburgh, which fully expects vintage Ben Roethlisberger

back from his elbow surgery. That's a dangerous game to play, especially with such a muddled situation at backup. Strange to think the Steelers could be the most unsettled at QB in this division.

AFC WEST

The Chargers have lots of alternatives with Rivers gone. Don't expect Tyrod Taylor to be elevated. Speculation (read: rumors) targets Brady landing in LA, though he's not quite a long-term solution. If the Chargers believe Newton can rebound, Dalton can be a winner again, or Foles/Bridgewater is deserving of a starting spot, they could move in those directions. Obviously, Kansas City has no worries outside of finding room for Patrick Mahomes' megadeal. Denver is ready to go with Drew Lock, who impressed in December, meaning Joe Flacco will be available. As for Las Vegas — oh yeah, the Raiders live there now — there remains plenty of suspicion that Jon Gruden would quickly move on from Derek Carr if he saw something more promising.

Tom Terrific in Sin City? □

Blues' Bouwmeester remains hospitalized after bench collapse

By **JOE REEDY**
AP Sports Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) —

Jay Bouwmeester remains in Southern California, but the veteran St. Louis Blues defenseman was alert and talking with teammates one day after collapsing on the bench during a game.

"He was in good spirits with us, typical Jay, so I think it certainly made us all feel a lot better knowing that we had the opportunity to talk to him. Typical Jay is a very good Jay," defenseman Alex Pietrangelo said.

The 36-year old Bouwmeester suffered a cardiac episode during the first period of Tuesday night's game against the Anaheim Ducks. General manager Doug Armstrong said during a news conference in Las Vegas on Wednesday that Bouwmeester was unresponsive after collapsing on the bench. A defibrillator was used and he regained consciousness immediately before being taken to an Anaheim hospital. "He is doing very well and is currently undergoing a battery of tests. Things are looking very positive," Armstrong said.

Pietrangelo — who was one of the first to call for help after Bouwmeester slumped over with 7:50 left in the first period — said he visited Bouwmeester in the hospital Tuesday night



In this Jan. 2, 2020 file photo St. Louis Blues defenseman Jay Bouwmeester skates against the Colorado Avalanche during the third period of an NHL hockey game in Denver.

Associated Press

and the rest of team got to see him via FaceTime. The team stayed overnight in Southern California before taking a chartered flight to Las Vegas, where they will play the Golden Knights on Thursday.

Bouwmeester's father was at the game as part of the team's annual dads trip and accompanied his son to the hospital.

The team had a meeting at the hotel in Las Vegas before the media was al-

lowed in. Several players remained for the news conference and appeared shaken and tired after a long night and morning.

"It's hard to even explain, it happened so fast, it felt like it was an eternity for us," Pietrangelo said. "It's not easy to see anybody go through it, let alone your close friend and teammate that you spend every day with. Certainly, we're lucky to have each other any-time you're going through

something like this."

While Bouwmeester remains hospitalized, the Blues are trying to refocus on hockey. The defending Stanley Cup champions lead the Western Conference with 73 points but the gap between the top three teams in the Central Division was only four points going into Wednesday's games. Armstrong and players lauded the Ducks and Blues medical staffs for their quick work.

"How quickly they got on there to revive Jay to get him back is a testament to the work that is done and a testament to the NHLPA and the NHL for making sure that teams do all the proper work behind the scenes and have the people in the right spots, that are there to help the guys if anything happens," Armstrong said.

The NHL has had standards in place to deal with potential life-threatening cardiac problems for several seasons. They include having a team physician within 50 feet of the bench. An orthopedic surgeon and two other doctors are also nearby.

Defibrillators must also be in close range. The home team has one on its bench and the away team must have theirs no further away than their locker room. Each medical team regularly rehearses the evacuation of a severely injured player before the season and all players are screened for serious cardiac conditions. The last player to collapse on an NHL bench before Bouwmeester was Dallas forward Rich Peverley in 2014. Peverley had an irregular heartbeat, and the quick response of emergency officials made sure he was OK. Detroit's Jiri Fischer had a similar episode in 2005. □



In this Monday, June 8, 2015 file photo, Former Chicago Blackhawks player Jeremy Roenick is surrounded by fans before Game 3 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Chicago.

Associated Press

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Jeremy Roenick will not be returning to NBC Sports after his suspension for mak-

ing inappropriate comments about coworkers.

A network spokesman confirmed to The Associated Press on Wednesday that

Jeremy Roenick won't return to NBC Sports after suspension

Roenick will not be back on the air. The spokesman said NBC Sports would have no further comment.

Roenick announced the end of his tenure at NBC Sports in a video posted on Twitter. "I'm very disappointed and angry today I will not be returning to NBC," Roenick said. "I'm also grateful that I've had the opportunity to share my love, my passion and my knowledge of the game with millions of people, millions of fans."

The longtime NHL player-turned-broadcaster added he won't be gone for long

and said he'd be back "better and more motivated to bring you the best entertainment and the best that I have for the game of hockey." NBC Sports suspended Roenick indefinitely without pay in late December after he made series of questionable remarks about fellow hockey broadcasters Kathryn Tappen, Patrick Sharp and Anson Carter during a recent appearance on the Spittin' Chiclets podcast. On the podcast, Roenick discussed a vacation to Portugal with his wife and Tappen where he made repeated references to

the NBC Sports anchor's appearance and joked about the possibility of the three of them having sex together. Later in the interview, Roenick called Sharp "so beautiful" and said: "I'd have to think about it if he asked me. ... I wouldn't say no right away" and then seemed to contrast Sharp's appearance with his and Carter's.

Roenick played 20 NHL seasons with the Blackhawks, Coyotes, Flyers, Sharks and Kings before moving into television. He had been an analyst at NBC Sports since 2010. □



In this Sunday, April 14, 2019, file photo, drivers prepare for the start of the Chinese Formula One Grand Prix at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai, China.

Associated Press

Formula One's Chinese Grand Prix postponed due to virus

By **ROB HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — Formula One organizers on Wednesday postponed the Chinese Grand Prix that was due to be staged in Shanghai in April, the latest sporting event impacted by the fast-spreading viral infection in the country. More than 1,100 people have died in China from the virus, which has been named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization. One of 22 races on the F1 calendar for 2020 that opens in Melbourne next month, the Chinese Grand Prix was due to be staged on April 19.

The decision to postpone the race was taken after a request from the Shanghai promoter to "ensure the health and safety of the travelling staff, championship participants and fans," F1 said in a statement.

It is the first time a race has been called off since political unrest led to the cancellation of the 2011 Bahrain Grand Prix.

"It's tough," Renault driver Daniel Ricciardo said shortly after the F1 announcement on China. "Obviously mixed feelings because personally I really enjoy the circuit, I had success there. I had a win in 2018 and I got my first points with Renault there last year. So it's been positive for me."

"I feel for the fans and everyone that's going to miss out, but more importantly I feel for China, what they

are going through at the moment with the virus. But on the flip side, I'm glad that some initiative has been taken and that we're not putting anyone else at risk."

Speaking at the launch of the Renault team's F1 car for 2020, Ricciardo said that a decision was needed now because teams have to send in equipment and personnel well in advance of races.

"(The virus) still hasn't been controlled to full effect," the Australian said at Renault's showcase store on the Champs-Élysées. "The problem is freight and all that would have to go this week, and they had to make an early call on it. Hopefully by April, things are controlled but this is a decision that needed to come soon."

"All parties will take the appropriate amount of time to study the viability of potential alternative dates for the grand prix later in the year should the situation improve," F1 said.

Other virus-enforced cancellations or postponements range from soccer and Olympic qualifying events to golf tournaments. The Tokyo Olympics open on July 24 and organizers have repeatedly said the games will not be cancelled or postponed. But many Olympic qualifying events are in disarray, with Chinese athletes not free to travel outside the country to participate. □



In this Sunday, July 7, 2019 file photo, United States' Megan Rapinoe poses with her individual awards at the end of the Women's World Cup final soccer match between US and The Netherlands at the Stade de Lyon in Decines, outside Lyon, France.

Associated Press

U.S. soccer men's union says women's pay should be tripled

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. men's national team urged the U.S. Soccer Federation to sharply increase pay of the American women and accused the governing body of making low-ball offers in negotiations with the men. The union for the women's team filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the USSF that is scheduled for trial starting May 5 in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. The women agreed to a collective bargaining agreement in April 2017 that extends through 2021. The men's labor contract expired at the end of 2018.

"The women's 2017-2021 deal is worse than the men's 2011-2018 deal," the men's union said in a statement Wednesday. "The federation continues to discriminate against the women in their wages and working conditions. ... What we believe should happen is simple. Pay the women significantly more than our recently expired men's deal. In our estimation, the women were due at least triple what our expired deal was worth in player compensation." The men claimed the federation wants their pay to stay at the same level as in their expired contract.

"It's a desperate attempt to cover up the fact that what they did to the women in 2017 is indefensible," the statement said. Carlos Cordeiro, who succeeded Sunil Gulati as USSF president in February 2018, did not respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment.

The men said they issued their statement because "the federation has been work-

ing very hard to sell a false narrative to the public and even to members of Congress. They have been using this false narrative as a weapon against current and former members of the United States women's national team."

Molly Levinson, a spokesperson for the players involved in the lawsuit, issued a statement on behalf of women's star Megan Rapinoe: "Our great hope is that 2020 will be the year of equal pay. We are grateful for the support of our male colleagues, and also for the overwhelming solidarity from millions of fans and sponsors around the world who have stood with us to fight USSF's discrimination."

"Achieving equal pay is so much bigger than our team and our playing fields — women in work forces everywhere deserve equality now."

The men claimed "the federation insisted the women sign a 2017-21 deal that was worse financially than the men's soon-to-expire 2011-18 CBA that had been negotiated six years earlier." They said "the correct comparison should be between what the women got with their 2017-21 deal and triple what the federation agreed to pay the men in 2011 or whatever the men negotiate in their new CBA that will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2019."

They urged fans to write to Congress and to "tell the federation's sponsors you will not support them until the federation starts doing the right thing and gives the women a new CBA that pays a fair share of the gate receipts and television and that sponsorship revenue to the players." □

Equifax hack highlights China interest in U.S. personal data

By **FRANK BAJAK**

AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — In 2014, the Obama administration accused five Chinese military agents of targeting Pittsburgh-area industrial companies including Westinghouse Electric, Alcoa and U.S. Steel. Since then, the number of companies allegedly targeted by Chinese hackers has only grown.

Chinese President Xi Jinping assured then-President Barack Obama in 2015 his military would stop stealing commercial secrets from U.S. companies. The evidence indicates that pledge was short-lived, if it was honored at all.

The latest in a string of China-linked hacking incidents came with the Monday indictment of four members of the Chinese military for breaking into the credit-reporting agency Equifax in 2017.

The motives, as with several others hacks that preceded it, appear to be more about espionage than stealing trade secrets, cybersecurity experts say. Among other things, experts who monitor the dark web say they have seen no evidence of data stolen in the Equifax hack — or in an earlier breach of Marriott — being sold to common criminals for ID theft and credit card fraud.

The state-backed Chinese hackers allegedly vacuumed up billions of data



From left, Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General Seth Ducharm, Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta, Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski, Attorney General William Barr, Assistant Attorney General John Demers, and U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia Byung "BJay" Pak, attend a news conference, Monday, Feb. 10, 2020, at the Justice Department in Washington.

points on Americans that could be used to cross-reference data and obtain deep insights into individual lives.

The data could be used in the recruitment of spies, and the hackers may have seeded cover identities for Chinese agents inside Equifax's databases, said Priscilla Moriuchi, a former NSA employee now at the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future.

Here are the biggest cases of wholesale data theft blamed on Chinese agents.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

In a devastating blow to

U.S. national security, the personal data of more than 21 million current, former and prospective federal employees was stolen. Although a first hacker was detected in March 2014, a second intruder went undetected until April 2015, by which time data on security clearances, background checks and fingerprint records had been extracted. A House inquiry said the hack was likely the work of "Deep Panda," a group linked to the Chinese military.

ANTHEM

Hackers stole personal information on nearly 80 mil-

lion current and former customers and employees of the Indiana-based health insurer over at least seven months ending in January 2015. Two members of a hacking group operating from China were later indicted in the biggest health care hack in U.S. history. Stolen data included Social Security numbers, birth dates, email addresses, employment details, incomes and street addresses. Anthem said it had no evidence that medical or financial information was taken or that any of the data stolen resulted in fraud.

The security firm Symantec said the hack was believed to be the work of a well-resourced Chinese group it called Black Vine that had been conducting cyber-espionage targeting industries including aerospace, energy and health care.

MARRIOTT

Beginning in 2014, hackers extracted data including credit card and passport numbers, birth dates, phone numbers and hotel arrival and departure dates on as many as 383 million guests of the hotel chain. The breach went undetected for four years and affected hotels in the Starwood chain that Marriott acquired in 2016.

Analysts noted that information from hotels — common venues of extramarital trysts and corporate espionage — could be used for blackmail and counterespionage. On Monday, Attorney General William Barr blamed the hack on Chinese agents.

OTHER MAJOR CORPORATIONS AND AGENCIES

Two hackers were indicted in December 2018 for extensive data theft from major corporations in the U.S. and nearly a dozen other nations beginning in 2006, allegedly on behalf of Beijing's main intelligence agency. They allegedly obtained names, Social Security numbers and other personal information of more than 100,000 Navy personnel. □

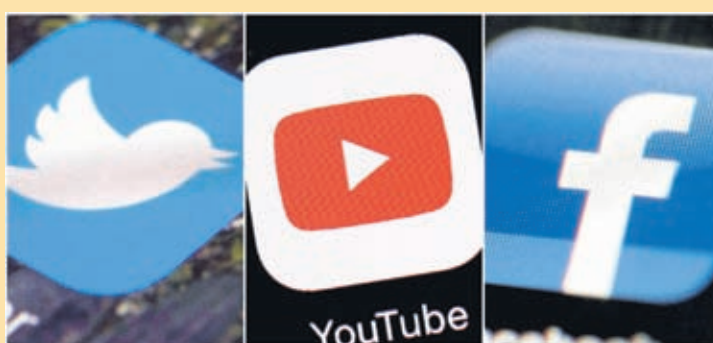
Associated Press

UK announces plan to fine firms for harmful online content

LONDON (AP) — The British government says it will give regulators the power to fine social media companies for harmful material on their platforms.

Plans announced Wednesday would give the U.K.'s telecommunications watchdog, Ofcom, power to enforce a "duty of care" on companies such as Facebook and Twitter "to protect users from harmful and illegal terrorist and child abuse content."

Firms that allow harmful material to flourish or don't remove it quickly could be



This combination of images shows logos for companies from left, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

Associated Press

sanctioned. Ofcom currently keeps tabs on radio and television broadcasters, and has the power to levy fines or even kick re-

peat offenders off the air. The government said it was "minded" to make the changes, but new legislation will be needed for it to

take effect. It said officials were working "at pace" to draft a new law. Ofcom will hold companies to account if they don't deal with harmful material, and platforms will have to remove "illegal content" quickly and "minimize the risk of it appearing."

In order to safeguard freedom of expression, the rules won't ban people from accessing or posting offensive but legal content, though the government indicated it would let internet companies decide what material is

tolerated. Online companies "will be required to explicitly state what content and behaviour is acceptable on their sites in clear and accessible terms and conditions and enforce these effectively, consistently and transparently," the government said.

Tech companies welcomed the regulations. "Facebook has long called for new regulations to set high standards across the internet," said Rebecca Stimson, the social network's head of U.K. public policy. □

U.S. whiskey exports decline as trade dispute with EU persists

By **BRUCE SCHREINER**

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) —

President Donald Trump's trade war dampened the overseas market for American-made whiskey last year, diminishing exports even as the domestic market continues to thrive.

Overall exports of bourbon, Tennessee whiskey and rye whiskey tumbled amid a trade war-induced decline in exports to key European markets. At home, U.S. sales posted solid gains, especially for pricier premium brands, the Distilled Spirits Council reported Wednesday. For distillers, it was the proverbial glass-half-full, glass-half-empty, scenario.

"While it was another strong year for U.S. spirits sales, the tariffs imposed by the European Union are causing a significant slump in American whiskey exports," said Chris Swonger, the council's president and CEO.

American whiskey makers have been caught in the middle of a trans-Atlantic trade dispute since mid-2018, when the EU imposed tariffs on American whiskey and other U.S. products in response to Trump's decision to slap tariffs on European steel and aluminum. Those duties amount to a tax, which whiskey producers can either absorb in re-



In this June 20, 2018 file photo, Catocin Creek Distillery whiskey is on display in a tasting room in Purcellville, Va.

duced profits or pass along to customers through higher prices — and risk losing market share in highly competitive markets.

The tariff headaches continued in 2019, when whiskey makers in the U.S. saw their exports decline by 16% to \$996 million compared to the prior year, the council said in its report.

American whiskey exports to the EU were down 27% in the last year, it said. American whiskey accounts for 65% of all U.S. spirits exports, and the EU is the top export market for whiskey makers.

Exports plunged by nearly 44% in Spain, nearly 33% in the United Kingdom and almost 20% in France, the council said.

At Catocin Creek Distillery in Virginia, prospects remain bleak for now to rebuild the business it had cultivated in Europe before the tariff fight.

"Tariffs remain in place and our business has been at a standstill with virtually no revenue coming in from Europe," said Scott Harris, co-founder and general manager of Catocin Creek. "We do have whiskey and

warehouses in Amsterdam, but with the increased pricing due to tariffs, it doesn't move very fast."

Whiskey producers got a shot of relief last year with an agreement to end retaliatory tariffs that Canada and Mexico had slapped on whiskey and other U.S. products. The new North American trade agreement preserves tariff-free trade for spirits with America's two neighbors, the council said.

Catocin Creek has managed to gain a foothold in Mexico, where it sold a

"small amount" of spirits last year as it tries to find new markets to make up for losses in Europe, Harris said. Meanwhile, the whiskey industry is hoping for a trade breakthrough with the EU.

"We are hopeful that the recent trade agreements will create new momentum for negotiations with the EU," said Christine LoCascio, the council's public policy chief. While the spirits industry faced stiff headwinds in Europe, it built up more momentum in the U.S.

Overall domestic supplier sales rose 5.3% to a record \$29 billion in 2019, the council said. Total volumes were up 3.3% to a record 239 million cases, it said.

Spirits continued to gain market share versus beer and wine in 2019, the council said. Combined U.S. revenues for bourbon, Tennessee whiskey and rye whiskey rose 10.8%, or \$387 million, to \$4 billion in 2019, the council said. Domestic volumes were up 8.4% to 26.6 million cases. Rye whiskey continued its upward trajectory with sales growth of 14.7% to reach \$235 million. The strongest revenue growth in the U.S. spirits market continued to come from high-end premium and super-premium products that fetch the highest prices. □

Super Bowl run-up helps boost N.J. gambling revenue

By **WAYNE PARRY**

Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) —

Betting on the NFL playoffs in the run-up to the Super Bowl, along with soaring internet gambling revenue and a solid month at Atlantic City's brick-and-mortar casinos led to an increase in New Jersey's gambling revenue of more than 30% in January.

Figures released Wednesday by the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement show the industry won over \$300 million last month, up 30.9% from January 2019 when sports betting was not as developed as it is now in the state.

Gamblers wagered over \$540 million on sports in January, mainly on football



This June 20, 2019 photo shows gamblers playing slot machines at the Hard Rock casino in Atlantic City, N.J.

Associated Press

and basketball, leading to the third-highest monthly total since the state began offering legal sports betting in June 2018. Those bets generated \$53.5 million in revenue for the casinos and two racetracks that offer sports betting, an increase of over 185% from a year ago.

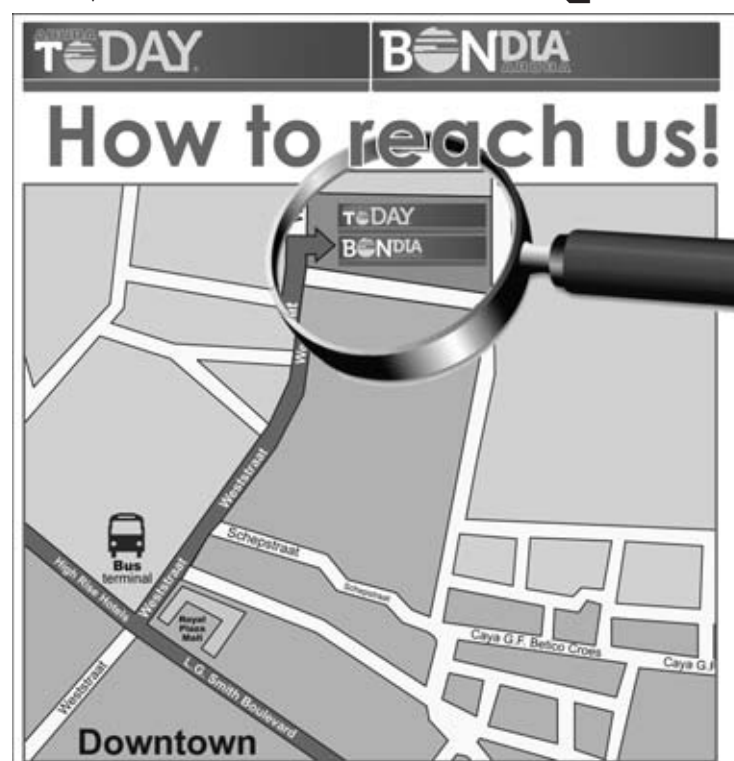
Internet gambling contin-

ued its steady climb in New Jersey, with casinos winning more than \$55 million online in January, an increase of 64% from a year ago.

And business at the brick-and-mortar casinos in Atlantic City was solid if not spectacular, with revenue up 8.3% to over \$192 million. "Atlantic City continued its momentum with strong re-

sults in January," said James Plousis, chairman of the

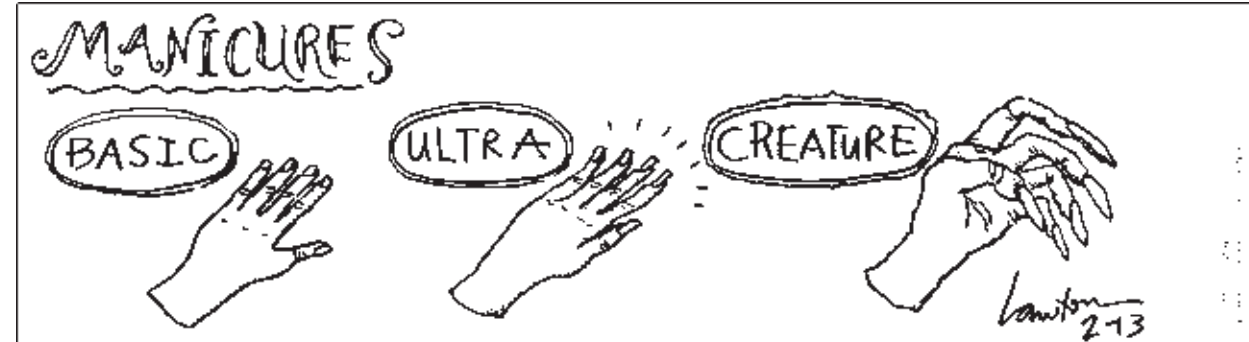
New Jersey Casino Control Commission. □



Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	3		5				4	2
1		2						7
	8	9		4				
2							1	
		6		9				
								9
			7			4	9	
7						3		5
9	5			8			6	

Difficulty Level ★★★

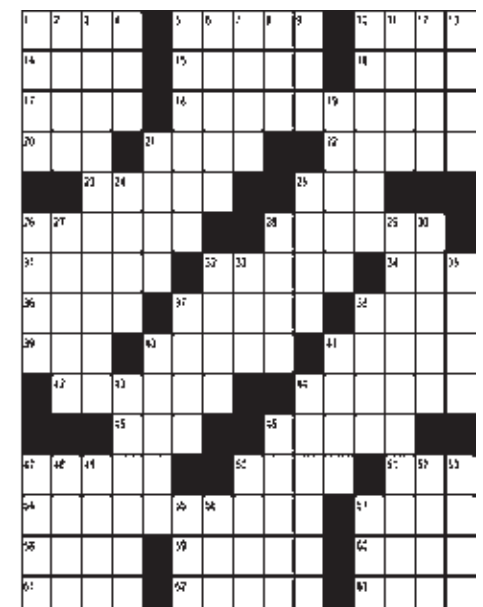
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

9	7	6	2	5	3	4	1	8
3	4	8	6	7	1	9	2	5
1	2	5	9	4	8	6	3	7
7	9	1	4	2	6	5	8	3
4	6	3	5	8	7	1	9	2
5	8	2	3	1	9	7	6	4
2	1	7	8	9	4	3	5	6
6	5	4	1	3	2	8	7	9
8	3	9	7	6	5	2	4	1

- ACROSS**
- Old MacDonald had a ...
 - Simone with a "black-tipped tail"
 - Early man
 - Zone
 - Lacking ...
 - Access Gaudi
 - Easter flower
 - Bored the ...
 - Lemon or lime suffix
 - Cod or perch
 - Baseball's Pee Wee
 - Accepted standards
 - Summer bower
 - Forty winks
 - Team defeats
 - Narrow street
 - Footwear
 - Voices
 - Peelies
 - Coral ridges
 - Lively
 - Scale divisions: alto
 - Four cups
 - Person
 - Teeth
 - Scagheners
 - Vegetable casing
 - Native New Zealand
 - Skirt fold
 - Waltress buyer's choice
 - Wednesday 228.20
 - Isolate due to disease
 - Access Sheedy
 - Scam seen
 - Castro, for one
 - Cloined
 - Phoenix team
 - Suspicious
 - Excessive publicity

- DOWN**
- Deck the halls with boughs of holly
 - Very dry
 - Bound and determined
 - Spring month
 - Be frugal
 - Long lock of hair
 - That hunt!
 - Commotion
 - Part of a royal flush
 - Flying saucer pilots
 - Cinton's 1996 election opponent
 - Schooner drinks
 - Created
 - Unicorn
 - Unravel at the edges
 - Singles
 - Enemies
 - Excuse for, summer
 - Excuse
 - Upper room
 - In particular
 - Begin a tennis game
 - Back & Ben
 - Thal woman
 - Fappa features



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

SHIP	BOAR	BEARS
WOMAN	RULE	GRIP
APPLE	ARISTOTLE	
TEE	WON	POISED
	DREAD	EDS
SHIEST	SCAMPS	
LIMIT	KITTY	RAM
OVEN	BIDES	SOFA
PEN	VENOM	WAFER
STRAND	FIGURE	
	OLE	ORGAN
FORBID	MOW	DAM
INAUDIBLE	AMIGO	
ACTS	COIN	MATES
TEST	TOES	CYST

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- Make money
- Bona ... gentle
- Word attached to sock or nappy
- Jerry's alter ego
- Org for Eagles & Seahawks
- Even score
- German exclamation

Classifieds

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Date : 01/17 to 02/22/2021

Marriott Surf Club

2 BR Ocean Side Platinum

Date : 03/6 to 03/13/2020

\$4 K

Divi Links Golf \$1,5 K

Carnival week sleep 4

Date :02/15 to 02/22/ 2020

Marriott Ocean Club

Platinum

1 BR Ocean View \$10 K

1 BR Ocean Front \$20 K

2 BR Ocean View \$17 K

2 BR Ocean View \$26 K

Marriott Surf Club

Platinum

2 BR Ocean View \$ 17 K

2 BR Ocean Side \$ 18 K

2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K

3 BR Ocean View \$26 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK 8

Building 6 on the 4th floor

27 weeks remain \$15 K

1 BR WK 11

building 7 on the 3rd floor

33 weeks remain \$15 K

Divi Phoenix

2 BR PH wk 11 and 12

building 9 on the 7 th floor

30 weeks remain #25 K each

Divi Village \$ 7 K

1 BR WK # 14

ground floor building C

16 weeks remain

Renaissance Suites

1 BR WK # 9 \$ 9 K

4th floor harbor view

Divi Village

2 BR Wk 13 \$13K

3 rd floor building

27 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf

1 BR Wk 6 \$8K Birdie 1

19 weeks remain

Studio wk 7/8

Birdie 5 \$7,5 K each

27/29 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK 8/9

Eagle 9 \$9,5K each

with 27/19 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK #11

Birdie 3 \$9 K

26 weeks remain

1 BR wk 12/13

ground Floor

With 33/34 weeks remain

Birdie 10 \$9,5 K each

Divi Village

Studio wk 6 \$ 7,5 K

Building F

21 weeks remain

2 sd Floor 18 weeks remain

Dutch Village

1 BR WK 7/8 \$9 K each

15 weeks remain each

2 BR WK 7 \$18 K

25 weeks remain

Dutch Village

1 BR WK 9

16 weeks remain

1 BR WK 8 \$8 K

12 weeks remain

1 BR WK 7/8 \$7 K

12/24 weeks remain

Eagle Resorts

1 BR WK 5,6,7,8

Ground Floor \$6,5 K each

1 BR wk 7/8/9 \$6,5 K each

Caribbean Palm Village

1 BR wk 3/4 \$6 K

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A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Jet Blue	588 2244
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CRUISES



February 13

Carnival Horizon

Caribbean Princess

February 14

Carnival Glory

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BP lays out long-term ambition to achieve net-zero emissions

By **DANICA KIRKA**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Energy producer BP said Wednesday it wants to eliminate or offset all carbon emissions from its operations and the oil and gas it sells to customers by 2050, though it remains unclear how it would achieve such an ambitious target as the company comes under pressure to help combat climate change.

London-based BP's goals include becoming a net zero emitter in its own production of energy but also to reduce the carbon dioxide created by its customers as they use that energy - the bulk of emissions from the industry. Doing so would require not only a shift to cleaner energy sources but also coming up with new technologies to offset emissions or extract CO2 from the atmosphere.

As such, BP's announcement was less of a detailed restructuring plan and more of a statement of intent from a company that is trying, like the wider energy industry, to ensure its long-term viability as the world decreases its reliance on fossil fuels in an effort to fight climate change.

"The world's carbon budget is finite and running out fast;



Police officers stand near activists outside BP's headquarters to mark the first day of the oil company's new chief executive Bernard Looney, at St James' Square in London, Wednesday Feb. 5, 2020.

we need a rapid transition to net zero," CEO Bernard Looney said in a statement. "We all want energy that is reliable and affordable, but that is no longer enough. It must also be cleaner."

In a presentation in London that featured climate scientists, investors and journalists, Looney acknowledged that targets and more specifics would follow. He compared the announcements, which come only two weeks into his tenure as CEO, as being

setting the destination in a GPS.

"We're starting with a destination," he said. "The details will come."

Other energy companies have expressed similar ambitions as public awareness of climate change - and the energy industry's role in emitting CO2 - has grown. Bob Ward, policy and communications director at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, called BP's plans a

"bold strategic move" that will put pressure on other oil companies to follow suit. But he said they don't go far enough if the world is going to meet the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels.

"The oil and gas industry can only survive the next few decades if they take ownership of the rapid transition to zero-emissions energy," Ward said. "However, what is lacking from BP's announcement is any

indication of whether the company accepts that there will be a major reduction in the global demand for its hydrocarbon fuels."

BP said it plans to help customers reduce their emissions by cutting in half the amount of greenhouse gases produced by the fuels it sells by 2050. The company also said it will increase investment in "low carbon businesses" and put less money into oil and gas businesses in coming years. It said it would install monitoring equipment at all oil and gas processing plants by 2023 as it seeks to reduce the amount of methane the facilities release into the environment by 50%.

Associated Press

On a broader level, the company said it would work to promote policies that move society toward net-zero emissions. BP said it will stop "corporate reputation advertising" and shift that spending toward promoting carbon reduction. Looney said society will have to invest trillions of dollars "in replumbing and rewiring the world's energy system."

He stressed that BP's commitment is to eventually reach net-zero emissions both for its own operations and for the fuels it sells. □



In this Tuesday, June 5, 2018 file photo, steam rises in the air from the brown coal power plant Schwarze Pumpe in the Lusatia, (Lausitz) area in Germany.

Associated Press

Global energy-related carbon emissions flat in 2019

BERLIN (AP) — Global energy-related emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide remained steady last year, with declines in rich countries balancing out a rise in poor nations, according to data published Tuesday.

The International Energy Agency said emissions of the main man-made greenhouse gas stayed at 33 gigatons in 2019, even as the world economy grew by 2.9%.

"This was primarily due to declining emissions from electricity generation in advanced economies, thanks to the expanding role of renewable sources (mainly wind and solar),

fuel switching from coal to natural gas, and higher nuclear power generation," the Paris-based agency said. "Other factors included milder weather in several countries, and slower economic growth in some emerging markets."

The country with the biggest drop in energy-related CO2 emissions was the United States, which recorded a fall of 2.9% to 4.8 gigatons on the back of coal-fired power plant closures and lower demand for electricity. The European Union saw its emissions fall by 5% to 2.9 gigatons, while Japan's dropped 4.3% to just over 1 gigaton in 2019.

By contrast, emissions in the

rest of the world rose by almost 400 million tonnes last year, led by higher coal use in Asia.

The IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol, expressed hope that annual emissions of CO2 would only decline in future.

"We now need to work hard to make sure that 2019 is remembered as a definitive peak in global emissions, not just another pause in growth," Birol said in a statement "We have the energy technologies to do this, and we have to make use of them all."

Reducing emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases is key to curbing climate change. □

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24/7

Missteps lead publishing industry to review diversity effort

By HILLEL ITALIE
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As debate rages around "American Dirt," the bestselling novel criticized for its portrait of Mexican life and culture, publishers are pledging to change a historically white industry as critics question whether it can truly transform.

Diversity has been an issue in publishing for years, but perhaps never so urgently as in the past few weeks, when Mexican American authors and others have cited "American Dirt" as evidence of a publishing culture where white voices are valued above others. Critics say flaws in Jeanine Cummins' narrative about a Mexican mother and son fleeing to the U.S. were overlooked by the book's editorial and promotional team and the many writers and booksellers who were early advocates.

"Of course, we've had a lot of conversations, looking at diversity and ways — as we always do — to address the recruitment and publishing of Latinos," says John Sargent, CEO of Macmillan, which released Cummins' novel last month through its Flatiron Books division.

Marketed in part as a new "Grapes of Wrath," the John Steinbeck novel which helped define the Great Depression, "American Dirt" was lauded by an industry that is predominantly white, liberal, anxious to make a profit and eager to make a difference. A book that Cummins and Flatiron had thought would personalize the experience of immigration instead became an example to some of its own distance from the issue.

Publishing executives and editors often shy away from discussing diversity on the record, but Flatiron president and publisher Bob Miller bluntly acknowledged they had not anticipated the "anger that has emerged from members of the Latinx and publishing communities."

"The fact that we were surprised is indicative of a problem, which is that in positioning this novel, we

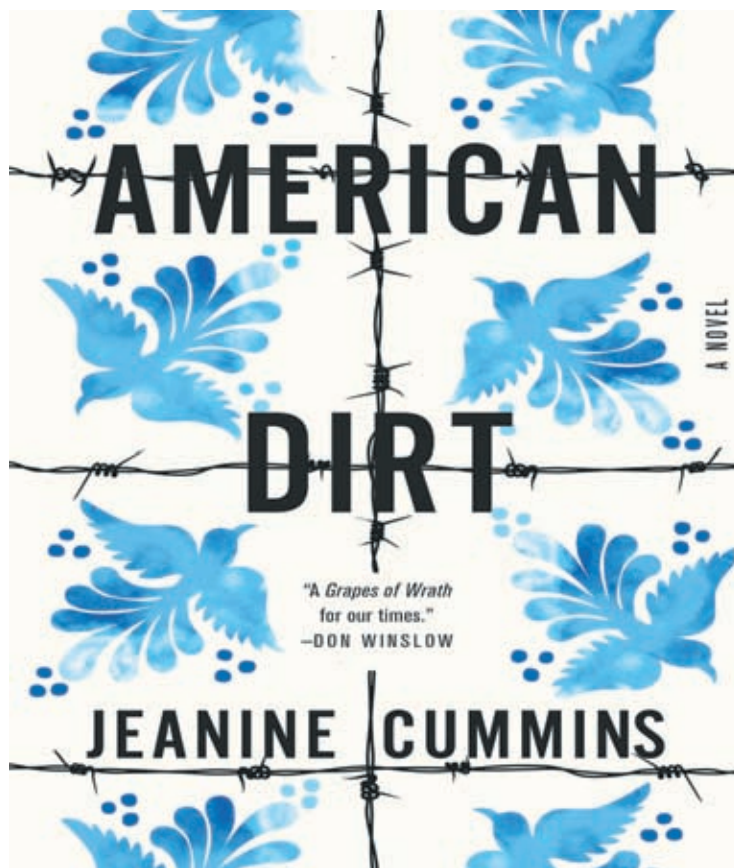
failed to acknowledge our own limits," Miller wrote in a recent press statement.

According to a new study by the multicultural children's publisher Lee & Low, the industry is around 75% white, and mostly female. No publisher who spoke to The Associated Press disputed those numbers, which were roughly the same as those in a Lee & Low survey released four years earlier. "Even though there may be more awareness of diversity issues, the numbers on the industry side aren't really changing," says Lee & Low publisher Jason Low. "It's still a very homogeneous industry, especially in some of the executive and gatekeeping roles."

CEOs including Sargent, Michael Pietsch of Hachette Book Group and Carolyn Reidy of Simon & Schuster say longtime barriers to diversity in publishing include the self-reinforcing networks of a historically white, upper-class industry, and the stress of being the only non-white member in a room. The industry's low salaries, "often from \$36,000-\$40,000 in one of the world's most expensive cities, can also make it hard to retain good people."

"They don't necessarily see a career path. They can get burned out and a little exhausted," says Nicole Johnson, executive director of the activist organization WeNeedDiverseBooks. Jennifer Baker, an author and editor who in 2014 created the "Minorities in Publishing" podcast, says the book world faces structural issues common to a wide range of industries. Asked if she had seen signs of progress in publishing, she said she saw "no clear pathway to correction, adding that "Bottom line," there won't be "sustainable change" without fully taking on the system itself.

Several publishing executives agreed on a rough outline of industry demographics: Entry level positions, notably in publicity and marketing, are the most diverse, while high-level editorial jobs are more white; employees under



This cover image released by Flatiron Books shows "American Dirt," a novel by Jeanine Cummins.

(Flatiron Books via AP)

40 are more diverse than those over 40; those who work in children's publishing are more diverse than those in adult books divisions.

"Children's librarians and educators have been at the forefront of urging publishers to diversify the books we offer," Pietsch says.

All of the so-called "Big Five" publishers — Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, Hachette, Macmillan and HarperCollins — have for years had diversity efforts, including internships and outreach programs, and in-house initiatives like mentoring and requirements that all job openings include a diverse range of candidates.

In 2019, Penguin Random House announced a "Strategy Plan" with goals including the diversification of employees and a more inclusive work culture. But the publisher faced its own embarrassment last week. It had collaborated with Barnes & Noble on "diverse" editions of such classic literature as "Frankenstein," "The Wizard of Oz" and "Romeo and Juliet" to honor Black History Month, which takes place in February. The covers featured illustrations of the main characters with dark skin, while the

texts, mostly by and about white people, were left the same. After widespread criticism online, with many wondering why the publisher and Barnes & Noble didn't simply promote writers of color, the program was canceled.

"These recent events underscore the critical importance of the work we have to continue to do together," says Penguin Random House US CEO Madeline McIntosh, adding that the publisher would "recommit" to a "full range of perspectives, experience, and expertise."

Earlier this week, Myriam Gurba, David Bowles and other prominent critics of "American Dirt" met with Flatiron executives. In a press release issued after the meeting, the writers — members of the activist group #DignidadLiteraria — said Macmillan had committed to developing an "action plan" within 90 days. Sargent declined to offer details but confirmed there was "an agreed upon effort" to address diversity. Imprints dedicated to diverse voices have been around for decades and continue to be formed, among them One World at Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster's 37

Ink. HarperCollins imprints include Amistad Press, one of the country's oldest African American publishers; and the Native-focused Heartdrum, scheduled to begin in 2021.

Amistad's editorial director, Tracy Sherrod, says she hopes to publish around 20-24 books this year, double what Amistad was releasing when she joined it eight years ago. Amistad's books range from Jacqueline Woodson's novel "Another Brooklyn" to Jennifer Lewis' memoir "The Mother of Black Hollywood."

"I first came into publishing in the 1980s and at that time it was believed that black people didn't read. That statement was made to me multiple times, so we've come a long way, a long way baby," she said with a laugh. "We're growing as an industry, but there will be some growing pains."

Since 2016, the trade group the Association of American Publishers has partnered with the United Negro College Fund for a paid internship program that places around 10 students each year. The activist organization WeNeedDiverseBooks works with publishers and agents to recruit interns; the program began with five interns in 2015 and will likely place 15-20 this summer. Out of 44 interns, 39 have since graduated from college and 30 have found full-time work in publishing, according to the organization.

Recent interns who spoke to The Associated Press had positive memories and said they learned valuable lessons.

"It made me want to continue pursuing a career in publishing," said Michaela T. Glover, who interned at Candlewick Press in 2018 and is now an intern at Heineman. Among other things, she said she read a few "tremendous manuscripts" and contributed to the illustrator meetings.

"I am still seeking to be a part of publishing and striving to have more diverse and inclusive stories and environments," she said. □



Laura Dern, winner of the award for best performance by an actress in a supporting role for "Marriage Story", poses in the press room at the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

(Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

Dern wins supporting actress Oscar for 'Marriage Story'

By LYNN ELBER
Associated Press
Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Laura Dern's turn as a steely divorce attorney in "Marriage Story" made the case with Oscar jurors, who completed her awards season sweep by awarding her the best supporting actress trophy. Dern's win Sunday came nearly three decades after her first Academy Award nomination, a lead actress bid in 1992 for "Rambling Rose." She received a supporting actress nod in 2015 for "Wild," and has earned Emmys and a wealth of critics' honors over the years.

"Some say, never meet your heroes. I say if you're really blessed, you get them as your parents," an emotional Dern said in accepting the trophy. "I share this with my acting legends, my heroes, Diane Ladd and Bruce Dern. You've got game. I love you." Dern also paid tribute to "Marriage Story" filmmaker Noah Baumbach. His film detailing a marriage's end is about love and healing divisions in the home and family, she said, "and hopefully for all us, in the name of our planet."

The actress, who turns 53 on

Monday, called the Oscar the "best birthday present ever." In a reflection of Dern's across-the-board respect, her awards for "Marriage Story" ranged from the mainstream Oscars and British Academy awards to critics' laurels, and prompted an Independent Spirit awards musical tribute Saturday. The versatile actress also was on screen last year in "Little Women," anchoring family life as Marmee for the film that garnered six Oscar bids, and has proved her commercial chops with the "Jurassic" franchise. Dern comes from a pedigreed Hollywood family: father Bruce is a two-time Oscar nominee ("Coming Home," "Nebraska"), and Ladd played her mom in "Rambling Rose" and earned her own Oscar nomination, for supporting actress. Laura Dern began acting as a child, moving from small roles to substantive, attention-getting work in the mid-1980s with "Mask," "Smooth Talk" and "Blue Velvet." Backstage, Dern was asked who inspired her take on the strong characters she played in "Marriage Story" and in TV's "Big Little Lies." "I start with my mother. She and my god-

mother, Shelley Winters, were massive influences on my life as an actor and activist," she replied. As for the advice she would give women aspiring to work in Hollywood, Dern said: "Be loud, be proud, stand by incredible sisters." Winters, who died in 2006 at age 85, was a two-time Oscar winner "A Patch of Blue" and "The Diary of Anne Frank." "I am really lucky at moments like this to have been raised by actors and to have been acting since I was 11," and to know how uncertain the industry can be, she said. "You stay detached, and you enjoy the gift of working with people you love and ... remembering what it's really about." But there's something to be said for the "other fun stuff that's dreamy and lovely," she added. The other contenders in the category were Kathy Bates for "Richard Jewell"; Scarlett Johansson, "Jojo Rabbit"; Florence Pugh, "Little Women" and Margot Robbie, "Bombshell." In a year notably scant in nominees of color, critics saw opportunities missed in the category with the omission of Jennifer Lopez for "Hustlers" and Zhao Shuzhen for "The Farewell." □

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	FRI 6:00 8:20 10:40
YIP	SAT 3:40 6:00 8:20 10:40
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FANTASY ISLAND LUCY HALE | MAGGIE Q

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THE PHOTOGRAPH LAKEITH STANFIELD | ISSA RAE

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BIRDS OF PREY MARGOT ROBBIE | MARY ELIZABETH WINSTED
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BAD BOYS FOR LIFE WILL SMITH | MARTIN LAWRENCE
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

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DOLITTLE ROBERT DOWNEY JR. | ANTONIO BANDERAS
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

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Leslie Jones livens up Siriano's NY Fashion Week front row

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With shouts of "Work it! work it!" from superfan Leslie Jones in the front row, Christian Siriano helped kick off New York Fashion Week on Thursday, rolling out sculptured showstopping gowns, looks of rainbow fringe and pops of bright "funhouse" green.

The "Saturday Night Live" alum could barely contain herself, hopping out of her seat at times to cheer on models as Heidi Klum looked on. In a backstage interview, Siriano told The Associated



Model Coco Rocha wears the final look of the Christian Siriano collection during Fashion Week, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020, in New York.

(AP Photo/John Minchillo)

Press he drew inspiration in part from the DC Comics superhero film "Birds of Prey," the story of how Harley Quinn joins forces

with others to battle crime lord Black Mask. Column gowns came in "Joker" Jacquard and multicolored "Harley" fringe. □

Naeem Khan's star-spangled collection pays homage to America

By KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Designer Naeem Khan sent models down the runway Tuesday in a shimmering, star-spangled collection the immigrant called his love letter to America, recalling how he started his brand with only \$500 and plenty of determination.

"I am where I am today out of sheer time and hard work and it's because of this country," he said during an emotional interview backstage. "This is my homage to thanking America." The opening look was an almost couture take on Uncle Sam with white satin pants, a bold red belt and navy blouse covered with white stars. Next up were shimmering blue sequined prints with white stars — one an elegant long-sleeved jumpsuit, the other a glamorous hooded caftan. Several of his signature caftans were also done in American reds and blues.

Models wore elaborate gold and silver headpieces, evocative of the Statue of Liberty. Others had gold

and silver sprigs shooting out of sleek buns, giving off the feel of fireworks.

"It's an election year and I wanted something to make a statement that says America," said Khan.

His love affair with animal prints continued in this collection with leopard print blouses and dresses, both short and long. A short, pink, sequin fringe dress was paired with thigh high leopard print boots. A show-stopping, full skirted dress in head-to-toe leopard had a dramatic neckline that plunged to the navel.

But the stars and stripes fuss waned toward the end of the collection when Khan sent models out in a rainbow palette of elegant, A-line gowns. Some had elaborate hand-beading in a floral motif.

Head-to-toe sequin looks were also woven throughout the collection, in body skimming numbers reminiscent of his Halston days, in modern jumpsuits and in a pantsuit with a matching sequined bandeau.

Khan dressed "The Irishman" actress Stephanie Kurtzu-



The fashion creation from Naeem Khan is modeled during New York's Fashion Week, Tuesday Feb. 11, 2020.

(AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

ba for the Oscars over the weekend, but confessed he was too busy with the collection to pay attention to the red carpet fashion.

But pal Ryan Seacrest, who attended Tuesday's show as part of New York Fashion week, listed Renee Zellweger, Salma Hayek, Penelo-

pe Cruz and Beanie Feldstein as his best dressed.

Seacrest said he's amazed to watch Khan's creative process.

"Naeem and I will have dinner and he'll come up with an idea and literally walk away from the table and sketch it out. And then I see it come to life today," Seacrest told The AP, confirming that at least one of the dinner table drawings actually made it down the runway Tuesday. "I was blown away and impressed once again."

Actor Ewan McGregor watched the show from backstage with the designer. In addition to the collection, Khan said he had been working on sustainable fashion in what he called "farm to your body" clothing and is considering growing his own hemp for material as a way to rein-vigorate fabric production in the United States.

"Sustainability has to be that you actually make an impact on the footprint," he said. "It's an ambitious project. It has to make economic sense. We'll see." □

Judge: Kesha made a false claim about producer Dr. Luke

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Pop singer Kesha made a false claim that Dr. Luke raped Katy Perry when there's "no evidence whatsoever" that he did, a judge ruled this week while sending a long-running clash between Kesha and her former mentor toward trial. Kesha's lawyers said in a statement that they plan to appeal Thursday's ruling, which also says she owes the prominent producer over \$373,000 in interest on royalties she paid him years late.

The decision isn't the final word in Dr. Luke's wider-ranging defamation and breach-of-contract suit against Kesha, but his lawyer said the ruling "brings him closer to the justice that he seeks."

"Dr. Luke looks forward to the trial of his case, where



In this Nov. 24, 2019 file photo, Kesha performs at the American Music Awards at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

he will prove that Kesha's other false statements about him were equally false and defamatory," said the attorney, Christine Lepera. Kesha, known for such hits as "TiK ToK" and "Praying," and Dr. Luke have been locked in court battles since 2014, when she filed a lawsuit alleging that he drugged and raped her in 2005 and

emotionally abused her for years. He denied it and sued her, saying she was smearing him with fabrications to try to get out of her record deal.

A New York court later dismissed Kesha's sexual abuse-related claims because of time limits and other legal issues, without ruling on whether the allegations had merit. Mean-

while, Kesha claimed — in a 2016 text message to Lady Gaga — that "Firework" singer Katy Perry "was raped by the same man." Dr. Luke, born Lukasz Gottwald, denies it, and Perry said it was "absolutely not" true during sworn questioning in 2017. "There is no evidence whatsoever that Gottwald raped Katy Perry," Manhattan judge Jennifer Schechter wrote in Thursday's decision, calling Kesha's remark a false statement that meets legal standards for being defamatory.

The finding is helpful to Dr. Luke. But the judge noted that many aspects of the suit remain to be decided, including the question of whether Kesha's allegation of her own rape is true. "Kesha and Gottwald have very different accounts of what happened

on the night at issue. This court cannot decide, as a matter of law on papers and without any assessment of credibility, who should be believed," the judge wrote. "That is a decision for the jury."

The singer, born Kesha Rose Sebert, released her latest album, "High Road," last week. Her emotional performance of "Praying" at the 2018 Grammy Awards marked a memorable moment as the ceremony gave voice to the #MeToo movement against sexual assault. Dr. Luke has produced some of the biggest pop hits of the 2000s, working with stars including Perry, Miley Cyrus, Kelly Clarkson and Nicki Minaj. The Associated Press does not generally name people who report being sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Kesha has done. □

AP Explains: What T-Mobile takeover of Sprint means for you

By **MAE ANDERSON** and **TALI ARBEL**

**Associated Press
Technology Writers**

NEW YORK (AP) — T-Mobile's \$26.5 billion takeover of Sprint could mean higher or lower phone bills, depending on whom you ask. A federal judge in New York ultimately took T-Mobile's track record of aggressive competition into account in ruling Tuesday that the deal would be good for consumers. In doing so, he rejected a challenge by a group of states worried about reduced competition. Though the deal still needs a few more approvals, T-Mobile expects to close it as early as April 1. Here's what a combined T-Mobile-Sprint company could mean for you and your phone bill:

FOR MOST T-MOBILE AND SPRINT CUSTOMERS

Sprint customers will get a T-Mobile bill, but that transition may take a few years. If you are a T-Mobile customer, you might not see many changes. However, because the goal of the takeover is to roll out a next-generation, 5G cellular network, subscribers of both are ultimately expected to get faster service.

WHAT ABOUT PREPAID CUSTOMERS?

As part of the deal, Dish will get Sprint's prepaid Boost Mobile customers. Dish has committed to building its own cellular network, but it will use T-Mobile's for now, so customers aren't supposed to see service quality drop.

HOW STRONG IS DISH?

That has yet to be tested. Sprint is an existing company with more than 40 million customers. Dish would start from scratch building a network that will cost billions of dollars. It gets only 9 million customers from the deal and will have to fight to win more.

As for the network, Dish already owns spectrum, or airwave rights, but hasn't been using it. The deal would give Dish additional airwaves that travel far and work well in rural areas. Dish is supposed to put those to use in its own network, but



In this Feb. 13, 2019, file photo Sprint Corporation Executive Chairman Marcelo Claure, left, speaks with T-Mobile US CEO and President John Legere during the House Commerce subcommittee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.



Karl-Anthony Towns surprises unsuspecting customers as an employee at a Metro by T-Mobile store on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020 in Minneapolis.

it has to rely on T-Mobile's network in the meantime. Dish says it will offer service to 70% of the U.S. population by 2023. But while it's billed as 5G, Dish is promising speeds that are only slightly higher than what's typical today. Dish co-founder Charlie Ergen said in a statement that the company is eager to start serving Boost customers, while bringing consumers lower prices, greater choice and more innovation. But it may take a while before Dish can challenge the bigger companies — if it ever does — the way T-Mobile developed a reputation as the "Un-carrier" by promoting consumer-friendly practices that shattered industry norms. Many public-interest groups have criticized the Dish solution,

saying it is risky, as there is no guarantee Dish will succeed as a major competitor, and that it does not fill the hole left by Sprint.

AND FOR VERIZON AND AT&T CUSTOMERS?

T-Mobile was instrumental in pushing the more established players to be more consumer friendly, doing away with two-year phone contracts and offering unlimited data plans. T-Mobile has offered goodies for its customers like free or discounted Netflix and free international data. With just three major providers, the worry is that there would be less incentive to add services that consumers like or to compete on price.

T-Mobile has promised not to raise prices for three years, but after that, it's fair game. But T-Mobile CEO John Legere said that the

challenge to the deal.

But Marrero said the states had not convincingly argued that the deal would lead to higher prices and lower quality service. He said Dish would become an aggressive competitor, while T-Mobile had the incentive to continue competing aggressively.

WHAT'S THIS 5G ALL ABOUT?

5G is a new technical standard for wireless networks that promises faster speeds; less lag, or "latency," when connecting to the network; and the ability to connect many devices to the internet without bogging it down. 5G networks will ideally be better able to handle more users, lots of sensors and heavy traffic.

The major U.S. wireless companies have all launched 5G networks and will continue rolling them out. There aren't many users yet, as the networks are limited in coverage, and few phones are currently equipped for 5G. Sprint's 5G network is now in parts of nine cities, while T-Mobile says its version already could cover 200 million people. They have promised to cover 97% of the U.S. within three years of finalizing the deal and 99% in six years. T-Mobile says its goal is a nationwide network that will be five times faster than current LTE service in a few years and 15 times faster by 2024. T-Mobile and Sprint would have built a 5G network even without combining, but Marrero agreed with the companies that their standalone networks would be more limited in scope and take longer to build. □

Associated Press

company will continue to be the "Un-carrier" and keep Verizon, AT&T and others on their toes.

"Look out Dumb and Dumber and Big Cable — we are coming for you ... and you haven't seen anything yet!" Legere said in a statement on Tuesday. Legere is stepping down as CEO in April; T-Mobile Chief Operating Officer and president Mike Sievert will replace him.

In his ruling, Judge Victor Marrero in New York said he found T-Mobile's promises credible.

SO WILL PHONE BILLS GO UP OR DOWN?

Opinion is divided. Generally, fewer competitors mean higher prices, which is why the Department of Justice required the companies to sell part of its business to Dish to keep the number of major wireless providers at four. This is also central to the states' chal-



Karl-Anthony Towns surprises unsuspecting customers as an employee at a Metro by T-Mobile store on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020 in Minneapolis.

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